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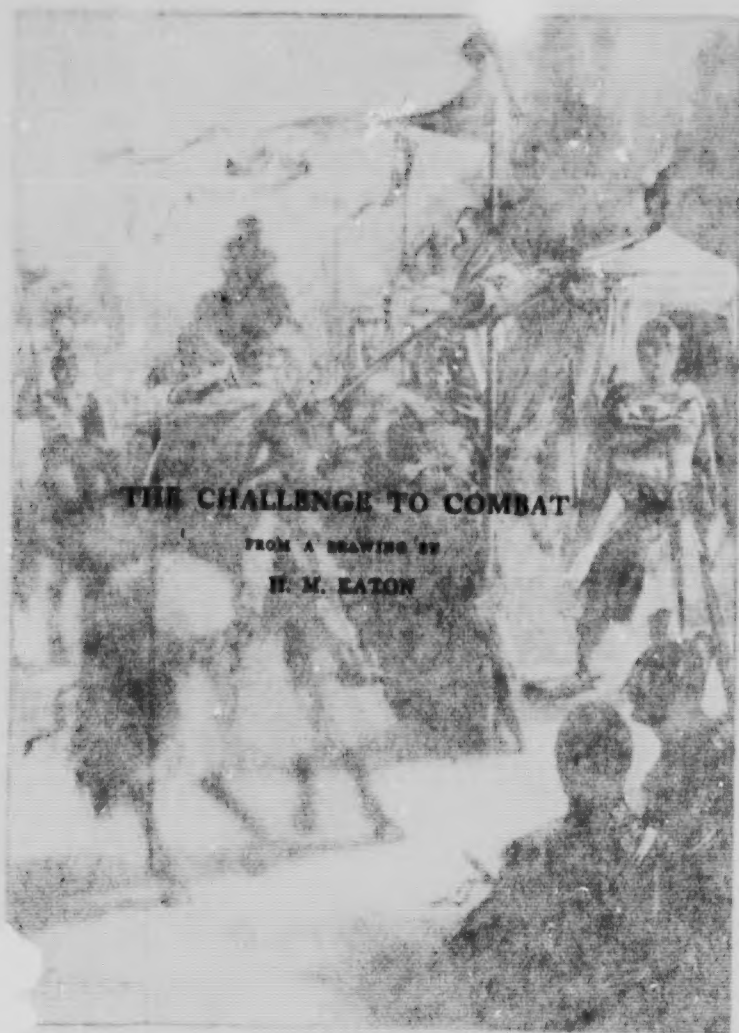
THE CHALLENGE TO COMBAT

WITH A DEDICATION BY

H. M. ESTON

Available only through the

Author



THE CHALLENGE TO COMBAT

FROM A DRAWING BY

H. M. EATON

Royal Canadian Edition

The Waverley Novels
by
Sir Walter Scott



Ivanhoe
The Abbot

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INTRODUCTION TO IVANHOE

Now fitted the halter, now traversed the cart,
And often took leave, but seem'd loath to depart !¹

PRIOR.

THE Author of the Waverley Novels had hitherto proceeded in an unabated course of popularity, and might, in his peculiar district of literature, have been termed *l'enfant gâté* of success. It was plain, however, that frequent publication must finally wear out the public favour, unless some mode could be devised to give an appearance of novelty to subsequent productions. Scottish manners, Scottish dialect, and Scottish characters of note, being those with which the Author was most intimately and familiarly acquainted, were the groundwork upon which he had hitherto relied for giving effect to his narrative. It was, however, obvious that this kind of interest must in the end occasion a degree of sameness and repetition, if exclusively resorted to, and that the reader was likely at length to adopt the language of Edwin, in Parnell's *Tale* :—

'Reverse the spell,' he cries,
'And let it fairly now suffice,
The gambol has been shown.'

Nothing can be more dangerous for the fame of a professor of the fine arts than to permit (if he can possibly prevent it) the character of a mannerist to be attached to him, or that he should be supposed capable of success only in a particular and limited style. The public are, in general, very ready to adopt the opinion that he who has pleased them in one peculiar mode of composition is, by means of that very talent, rendered incapable of venturing upon other subjects. The effect of this disinclination, on the part of the public, towards the artificers of their pleasures, when they attempt to enlarge their means of amusing, may be seen in the censures usually passed by vulgar

¹ The motto alludes to the author returning to the stage repeatedly after having taken leave.

criticism upon actors or artists who venture to change the character of their efforts, that, in so doing, they may enlarge the scale of their art.

There is some justice in this opinion, as there always is in such as attain general currency. It may often happen on the stage, that an actor, by possessing in a pre-eminent degree the external qualities necessary to give effect to comedy, may be deprived of the right to aspire to tragic excellence; and in painting or literary composition, an artist or poet may be master exclusively of modes of thought and powers of expression which confine him to a single course of subjects. But much more frequently the same capacity which carries a man to popularity in one department will obtain for him success in another, and that must be more particularly the case in literary composition than either in acting or painting, because the adventurer in that department is not impeded in his exertions by any peculiarity of features, or conformation of person, proper for particular parts, or, by any peculiar mechanical habits of using the pencil, limited to a particular class of subjects.

Whether this reasoning be correct or otherwise, the present Author felt that, in confining himself to subjects purely Scottish, he was not only likely to weary out the indulgence of his readers, but also greatly to limit his own power of affording them pleasure. In a highly polished country, where so much genius is monthly employed in catering for public amusement, a fresh topic, such as he had himself had the happiness to light upon, is the untasted spring of the desert:

Men bless their stars and call it luxury.

But when men and horses, cattle, camels, and dromedaries have poached the spring into mud, it becomes loathsome to those who at first drank of it with rapture; and he who had the merit of discovering it, if he would preserve his reputation with the tribe, must display his talents by a fresh discovery of untasted mountains.

If the author, who finds himself limited to a particular class of subjects, endeavours to sustain his reputation by striving to add a novelty of attraction to themes of the same character which have been formerly successful under his management, there are manifest reasons why, after a certain point, he is likely to fail. If the mine be not wrought out, the strength and capacity of the miner become necessarily exhausted. If he closely imitates the narratives which he has before rendered successful, he is doomed to 'wonder that they please no more.'

If he struggles to take a different view of the same class of subjects, he speedily discovers that what is obvious, graceful, and natural has been exhausted; and, in order to obtain the indispensable charm of novelty, he is forced upon caricature, and, to avoid being trite, must become extravagant.

It is not, perhaps, necessary to enumerate so many reasons why the Author of the Scottish Novels, as they were then exclusively termed, should be desirous to make an experiment on a subject so truly English. It was his purpose, at the same time, to have rendered the experiment as complete as possible, by bringing the intended work before the public as the effort of a new candidate for their favour, in order that no degree of prejudice, whether favourable or the reverse, might attach to it, as a new production of the Author of *Waverley*; but this intention was afterwards departed from, for reasons to be hereafter mentioned.

The period of the narrative adopted was the reign of Richard I., not only as abounding with characters whose very names were sure to attract general attention, but as affording a striking contrast betwixt the Saxons, by whom the soil was cultivated, and the Normans, who still reigned in it as conquerors, reluctant to mix with the vanquished, or acknowledge themselves of the same stock. The idea of this contrast was taken from the ingenious and unfortunate Logan's tragedy of *Runnemedie*, in which, about the same period of history, the Author had seen the Saxon and Norman barons opposed to each other on different sides of the stage. He does not recollect that there was any attempt to contrast the two races in their habits and sentiments; and indeed it was obvious that history was violated by introducing the Saxons still existing as a high-minded and martial race of nobles.

They did, however, survive as a people, and some of the ancient Saxon families possessed wealth and power, although they were exceptions to the humble condition of the race in general. It seemed to the Author that the existence of the two races in the same country, the vanquished distinguished by their plain, homely, blunt manners, and the free spirit infused by their ancient institutions and laws; the victors, by the high spirit of military fame, personal adventure, and whatever could distinguish them as the flower of chivalry, might, intermixed with other characters belonging to the same time and country, interest the reader by the contrast, if the Author should not fail on his part.

Scotland, however, had been of late used so exclusively as

the scene of what is called historical romance, that the preliminary letter of Mr. Laurence Templeton became in some measure necessary. To this, as to an Introduction, the reader is referred, as expressing the Author's purpose and opinions in undertaking this species of composition, under the necessary reservation, that he is far from thinking he has attained the point at which he aimed.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that there was no idea or wish to pass off the supposed Mr. Templeton as a real person. But a kind of continuation of the *Tales of my Landlord* had been recently attempted by a stranger, and it was supposed this Dedictory Epistle might pass for some imitation of the same kind, and thus, putting inquirers upon a false scent, induce them to believe they had before them the work of some new candidate for their favour.

After a considerable part of the work had been finished and printed, the publishers, who pretended to discern in it a germ of popularity, remonstrated strenuously against its appearing as an absolutely anonymous production, and contended that it should have the advantage of being announced as by the Author of *Waverley*. The Author did not make any obstinate opposition, for he began to be of opinion with Dr. Wheeler, in Miss Edgeworth's excellent tale of *Manœuvring*, that 'trick upon trick' might be too much for the patience of an indulgent public, and might be reasonably considered as trifling with their favour.

The book, therefore, appeared as an avowed continuation of the *Waverley Novels*; and it would be ungrateful not to acknowledge that it met with the same favourable reception as its predecessors.

Such annotations as may be useful to assist the reader in comprehending the characters of the Jew, the Templar, the captain of the mercenaries, or Free Companions, as they were called, and others proper to the period, are added, but with a sparing hand, since sufficient information on these subjects is to be found in general history.

An incident in the tale, which had the good fortune to find favour in the eyes of many readers, is more directly borrowed from the stores of old romance. I mean the meeting of the King with Friar Tuck at the cell of that buxom hermit. The general tone of the story belongs to all ranks and all countries, which emulate each other in describing the rambles of a disguised sovereign, who, going in search of information or amusement into the lower ranks of life, meets with adventures

diverting to the reader or hearer, from the contrast betwixt the monarch's outward appearance and his real character. The Eastern tale-teller has for his theme the disguised expeditions of Haroun Alraschid with his faithful attendants, Mesrour and Giafar, through the midnight streets of Bagdad; and Scottish tradition dwells upon the similar exploits of James V., distinguished during such excursions by the travelling name of the Goodman of Ballengeigh, as the Commander of the Faithful, when he desired to be incognito, was known by that of Il Bondocani. The French minstrels are not silent on so popular a theme. There must have been a Norman original of the Scottish metrical romance of *Rauf Colziar*, in which Charlemagne is introduced as the unknown guest of a charcoal-man.¹ It seems to have been the original of other poems of the kind.

In merry England there is no end of popular ballads on this theme. The poem of *John the Reeve*, or Steward, mentioned by Bishop Percy, in the *Reliques of English Poetry*² is said to have turned on such an incident; and we have, besides, the *King and the Tanner of Tamworth*, the *King and the Miller of Mansfield*, and others on the same topic. But the peculiar tale of this nature to which the Author of *Ivanhoe* has to acknowledge an obligation is more ancient by two centuries than any of these last mentioned.

It was first communicated to the public in that curious record of ancient literature which has been accumulated by the combined exertions of Sir Egerton Brydges and Mr. Hazlewood, in the periodical work entitled the *British Bibliographer*. From thence it has been transferred by the Reverend Charles Henry Hartshorne, M. A., editor of a very curious volume, entitled *Ancient Metrical Tales, printed chiefly from Original Sources*, 1829. Mr. Hartshorne gives no other authority for the present fragment, except the article in the *Bibliographer*, where it is entitled the *Kyng and the Hermite*. A short abstract of its contents will show its similarity to the meeting of King Richard and Friar Tuck.

King Edward (we are not told which among the monarchs of that name, but, from his temper and habits, we may suppose Edward IV.) sets forth with his court to a gallant hunting-match in Sherwood Forest, in which, as is not unusual for princes in romance, he falls in with a deer of extraordinary

¹ This very curious poem, long a desideratum in Scottish literature, and given up as irrecoverably lost, was lately brought to light by the researches of Dr. Irving of the Advocates' Library, and has been reprinted by Mr. David Laing, Edinburgh.

² Vol. II. p. 167.

size and swiftness, and pursues it closely, till he has outstripped his whole retinue, tired out hounds and horse, and finds himself alone under the gloom of an extensive forest, upon which night is descending. Under the apprehensions natural to a situation so uncomfortable, the king recollects that he has heard how poor men, when apprehensive of a bad night's lodging, pray to St. Julian, who, in the Romish calendar, stands quarter-master-general to all forlorn travellers that render him due homage. Edward puts up his orisons accordingly, and by the guidance, doubtless, of the good saint, reaches a small path, conducting him to a chapel in the forest, having a hermit's cell in its close vicinity. The king hears the reverend man, with a companion of his solitude, telling his beads within, and meekly requests of him quarters for the night. 'I have no accommodation for such a lord as ye be,' said the hermit. 'I live here in the wilderness upon roots and rinds, and may not receive into my dwelling even the poorest wretch that lives, unless it were to save his life.' The king inquires the way to the next town, and, understanding it is by a road which he cannot find without difficulty, even if he had daylight to befriend him, he declares that, with or without the hermit's consent, he is determined to be his guest that night. He is admitted accordingly, not without a hint from the recluse that, were he himself out of his priestly weeds, he would care little for his threats of using violence, and that he gives way to him not out of intimidation, but simply to avoid scandal.

The king is admitted into the cell; two bundles of straw are shaken down for his accommodation, and he comforts himself that he is now under shelter, and that

A night will soon be gone.

Other wants, however, arise. The guest becomes clamorous for supper, observing,

'For certainly, as I you say,
I ne had never so sorry a day,
That I ne had a merry night.'

But this indication of his taste for good cheer, joined to the annunciation of his being a follower of the court, who had lost himself at the great hunting-match, cannot induce the niggard hermit to produce better fare than bread and cheese, for which his guest showed little appetite, and 'thin drink,' which was even less acceptable. At length the king presses his host on

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a point to which he had more than once alluded, without obtaining a satisfactory reply:

Then said the king, 'By Godys grace,
Thou wert in a merry place,
To shoot should thou lere;
When the foresters go to rest,
Sometyme thou might have of the best,
All of the wild deer;
I wold hold it for no scathe,
Though thou hadst bow and arrows baith,
Althoff thou best a frere.'

The hermit, in return, expresses his apprehension that his guest means to drag him into some confession of offence against the forest laws, which, being betrayed to the King, might cost him his life. Edward answers by fresh assurances of secrecy, and again urges on him the necessity of procuring some venison. The hermit replies, by once more insisting on the duties incumbent upon him as a churchman, and continues to affirm himself free from all such breaches of order:

'Many day I have here been,
And flesh-meat I eat never,
But milk of the kye;
Warm thee well, and go to sleep,
And I will lap thee with my cope,
Softly to lye.'

It would seem that the manuscript is here imperfect, for we do not find the reasons which finally induce the curtal friar to amend the king's cheer. But, acknowledging his guest to be such a 'good fellow' as has seldom graced his board, the holy man at length produces the best his cell affords. Two candles are placed on a table, white bread and baked pasties are displayed by the light, besides choice of venison, both salt and fresh, from which they select collops. 'I might have eaten my bread dry,' said the king, 'had I not pressed thee on the score of archery, but now have I dined like a prince — if we had but drink enow.'

This too is afforded by the hospitable anchorite, who despatches an assistant to fetch a pot of four gallons from a secret corner near his bed, and the whole three set in to serious drinking. This amusement is superintended by the friar, according to the recurrence of certain fustian words, to be repeated by every compotator in turn before he drank — a species of high jinks, as it were, by which they regulated their pota-

tions, as toasts were given in latter times. The one toper says 'Fusty bandias,' to which the other is obliged to reply, 'Strike pantnere,' and the friar passes many jests on the king's want of memory, who sometimes forgets the words of action. The night is spent in this jolly pastime. Before his departure in the morning, the king invites his reverend host to court, promises, at least, to requite his hospitality, and expresses himself much pleased with his entertainment. The jolly hermit at length agrees to venture thither, and to inquire for Jack Fletcher, which is the name assumed by the king. After the hermit has shown Edward some feats of archery, the joyous pair separate. The king rides home, and rejoins his retinue. As the romance is imperfect, we are not acquainted how the discovery takes place; but it is probably much in the same manner as in other narratives turning on the same subject, where the host, apprehensive of death for having trespassed on the respect due to his sovereign, while incognito, is agreeably surprised by receiving honours and reward.

In Mr. Hartshorne's collection, there is a romance on the same foundation, called *King Edward and the Shepherd*,¹ which, considered as illustrating manners, is still more curious than *The King and the Hermit*; but it is foreign to the present purpose. The reader has here the original legend from which the incident in the romance is derived; and the identifying the irregular eremite with the Friar Tuck of Robin Hood's story was an obvious expedient.

The name of Ivanhoe was suggested by an old rhyme. All novelists have had occasion at some time or other to wish with Falstaff that they knew where a commodity of good names was to be had. On such an occasion the Author chanced to call to memory a rhyme recording three names of the manors forfeited by the ancestor of the celebrated Hampden, for striking the Black Prince a blow with his racket, when they quarrelled at tennis:

Tring, Wing, and Ivanhoe,
For striking of a blow,
Hampden did forego,
And glad he could escape so.

The word suited the Author's purpose in two material re-

¹ Like the hermit, the shepherd makes havock amongst the king's game; but by means of a sling, not of a bow; like the hermit, too, he has his peculiar phrases of computation, the sign and countersign being *Passelo'lon* and *Berairlend*. One can scarce conceive what humour our ancestors found in this species of gibberish; but

I warrant it proved an excuse for the glass.

spects — for, first, it had an ancient English sound ; and secondly, it conveyed no indication whatever of the nature of the story. He presumes to hold this last quality to be of no small importance. What is called a taking title serves the direct interest of the bookseller or publisher, who by this means sometimes sells an edition while it is yet passing the press. But if the author permits an over degree of attention to be drawn to his work ere it has appeared, he places himself in the embarrassing condition of having excited a degree of expectation which, if he proves unable to satisfy, is an error fatal to his literary reputation. Besides, when we meet such a title as the Gunpowder Plot, or any other connected with general history, each reader, before he has seen the book, has formed to himself some particular idea of the sort of manner in which the story is to be conducted, and the nature of the amusement which he is to derive from it. In this he is probably disappointed, and in that case may be naturally disposed to visit upon the author or the work the unpleasant feelings thus excited. In such a case the literary adventurer is censured, not for having missed the mark at which he himself aimed, but for not having shot off his shaft in a direction he never thought of.

On the footing of unreserved communication which the Author has established with the reader, he may here add the trifling circumstance, that a roll of Norman warriors, occurring in the Auchinleck Manuscript, gave him the formidable name of Front-de-Bœuf.

Ivanhoe was highly successful upon its appearance, and may be said to have procured for its Author the freedom of the rules, since he has ever since been permitted to exercise his powers of fictitious composition in England as well as Scotland.

The character of the fair Jewess¹ found so much favour in the eyes of some fair readers, that the writer was censured because, when arranging the fates of the characters of the drama, he had not assigned the hand of Wilfred to Rebecca, rather than the less interesting Rowena. But, not to mention that the prejudices of the age rendered such a union almost impossible, the Author may, in passing, observe, that he thinks a character of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp is degraded rather than exalted by an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity. Such is not the recompense which Providence has deemed worthy of suffering merit, and it is a dangerous and fatal doctrine to teach young persons, the most common

¹ See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. vi. p. 177, ed. 1862.

readers of romance, that rectitude of conduct and of principle are either naturally allied with or adequately rewarded by the gratification of our passions, or attainment of our wishes. In a word, if a virtuous and self-denied character is dismissed with temporal wealth, greatness, rank, or the indulgence of such a rashly-formed or ill-assorted passion as that of Rebecca for Ivanhoe, the reader will be apt to say, 'Verily virtue has had its reward.' But a glance on the great picture of life will show that the duties of self-denial, and the sacrifice of passion to principle, are seldom thus remunerated; and that the internal consciousness of their high-minded discharge of duty procures on their own reflections a more adequate recompense, in the form of that peace which the world cannot give or take away.

ABBOTSFORD, 1st September 1830.

DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO

THE REV. DR. DRYASDUST, F.A.S.

Residing at the Castle Gate, York.

MUCH REVERED AND DEAR SIR,

IT is scarcely necessary to mention the various and concurring reasons which induce me to place your name at the head of the following work. Yet the chief of these reasons may perhaps be refuted by the imperfections of the performance. Could I have hoped to render it worthy of your patronage, the public would at once have seen the propriety of inscribing a work designed to illustrate the domestic antiquities of England, and particularly of our Saxon forefathers, to the learned author of the *Essays upon the Horn of King Ulphus*, and on the Lands bestowed by him upon the patrimony of St. Peter. I am conscious, however, that the slight, unsatisfactory, and trivial manner in which the result of my antiquarian research has been recorded in the following pages takes the work from under that class which bears the proud motto, *sur digniori*. On the contrary, I fear I shall incur the censure of presumption in placing the venerable name of Dr. Jonas Dryasdust at the head of a publication which the more grave antiquary will perhaps class with the idle novels and romances of the day. I am anxious to vindicate myself from such a charge; for, although I might trust to your friendship for an apology in your eyes, yet I would not willingly stand convicted in those of the public of so grave a crime as my fears lead me to anticipate my being charged with.

I must therefore remind you, that when we first talked over together that class of productions, in one of which the private and family affairs of your learned northern friend, Mr. Oldbuck

of Monkbarns, were so unjustifiably exposed to the public, some discussion occurred between us concerning the cause of the popularity these works have attained in this idle age, which, whatever other merit they possess, must be admitted to be hastily written, and in violation of every rule assigned to the epopeia. It seemed then to be your opinion that the charm lay entirely in the art with which the unknown author had availed himself, like a second M'Pherson, of the antiquarian stores which lay scattered around him, supplying his own indolence or poverty of invention by the incidents which had actually taken place in his country at no distant period, by introducing real characters, and scarcely suppressing real names. It was not above sixty or seventy years, you observed, since the whole north of Scotland was under a state of government nearly as simple and as patriarchal as those of our good allies the Mohawks and Iroquois. Admitting that the Author cannot himself be supposed to have witnessed those times, he must have lived, you observed, among people who had acted and suffered in them, and even within these thirty years, such an infinite change has taken place in the manners of Scotland that men look back upon the habits of society proper to their immediate ancestors as we do on those of the reign of Queen Anne, or even the period of the Revolution. Having thus materials of every kind lying strewed around him, there was little, you observed, to embarrass the Author, but the difficulty of choice. It was no wonder, therefore, that, having begun to work a mine so plentiful, he should have derived from his works fully more credit and profit than the facility of his labours merited.

Admitting (as I could not deny) the general truth of these conclusions, I cannot but think it strange that no attempt has been made to excite an interest for the traditions and manners of Old England, similar to that which has been obtained in behalf of those of our poorer and less celebrated neighbours. The Kendal green, though its date is more ancient, ought surely to be as dear to our feelings as the variegated tartans of the north. The name of Robin Hood, if duly conjured with, should raise a spirit as soon as that of Rob Roy; and the patriots of England deserve no less their renown in our modern circles than the Bruces and Wallaces of Caledonia. If the scenery of the south be less romantic and sublime than that of the northern mountains, it must be allowed to possess in the same proportion superior softness and beauty; and, upon the whole, we

feel ourselves entitled to exclaim with the patriotic Syrian —
'Are not Pharpar and Abana, rivers of Damascus, better than
all the rivers of Israel?'

Your objections to such an attempt, my dear Doctor, were, you may remember, twofold. You insisted upon the advantages which the Scotsman possessed, from the very recent existence of that state of society in which his scene was to be laid. Many now alive, you remarked, well remembered persons who had not only seen the celebrated Roy M'Gregor, but had feasted, and even fought, with him. All those minute circumstances belonging to private life and domestic character, all that gives verisimilitude to a narrative and individuality to the persons introduced, is still known and remembered in Scotland; whereas in England civilisation has been so long complete, that our ideas of our ancestors are only to be gleaned from musty records and chronicles, the authors of which seem perversely to have conspired to suppress in their narratives all interesting details, in order to find room for flowers of monkish eloquence, or trite reflections upon morals. To match an English and a Scottish author in the rival task of embodying and reviving the traditions of their respective countries would be, you alleged, in the highest degree unequal and unjust. The Scottish magician, you said, was, like Lucan's witch, at liberty to walk over the recent field of battle, and to select for the subject of resuscitation by his sorceries a body whose limbs had recently quivered with existence, and whose throat had but just uttered the last note of agony. Such a subject even the powerful Erichtho was compelled to select, as alone capable of being reanimated even by *her* potent magic —

Gelidas leto scrutata medullas,
Pulmonis rigidi stantes sine vulnere fibras
Invenit, et vocem defuncto in corpore quarit.

The English author, on the other hand, without supposing him less of a conjuror than the Northern Warlock, can, you observed, only have the liberty of selecting his subject amidst the dust of antiquity, where nothing was to be found but dry, sapless, mouldering, and disjointed bones, such as those which filled the valley of Jehoshaphat. You expressed, besides, your apprehension that the unpatriotic prejudices of my countrymen would not allow fair play to such a work as that of which I endeavoured to demonstrate the probable success. And this, you said, was not entirely owing to the more general prejudice

in favour of that which is foreign, but that it rested partly upon improbabilities, arising out of the circumstances in which the English reader is placed. If you describe to him a set of wild manners, and a state of primitive society, existing in the Highlands of Scotland, he is much disposed to acquiesce in the truth of what is asserted. And reason good. If he be of the ordinary class of readers, he has either never seen those remote districts at all, or he has wandered through those desolate regions in the course of a summer tour, eating bad dinners, sleeping on truckle beds, stalking from desolation to desolation, and fully prepared to believe the strangest things that could be told him of a people wild and extravagant enough to be attached to scenery so extraordinary. But the same worthy person, when placed in his own snug parlour, and surrounded by all the comforts of an Englishman's fireside, is not half so much disposed to believe that his own ancestors led a very different life from himself; that the shattered tower which now forms a vista from his window once held a baron who would have hung him up at his own door without any form of trial; that the hinds, by whom his little pet farm is managed, a few centuries ago would have been his slaves; and that the complete influence of feudal tyranny once extended over the neighbouring village, where the attorney is now a man of more importance than the lord of the manor.

While I own the force of these objections, I must confess, at the same time, that they do not appear to me to be altogether insurmountable. The scantiness of materials is indeed a formidable difficulty; but no one knows better than Dr. Dryasdust that to those deeply read in antiquity hints concerning the private life of our ancestors lie scattered through the pages of our various historians, bearing, indeed, a slender proportion to the other matters of which they treat, but still, when collected together, sufficient to throw considerable light upon the *vie privée* of our forefathers; indeed, I am convinced that, however I myself may fail in the ensuing attempt, yet, with more labour in collecting, or more skill in using, the materials within his reach, illustrated as they have been by the labours of Dr. Henry, of the late Mr. Strutt, and, above all, of Mr. Sharon Turner, an abler hand would have been successful; and therefore I protest, beforehand, against any argument which may be founded on the failure of the present experiment.

On the other hand, I have already said that, if anything like a true picture of old English manners could be drawn, I would

trust to the good nature and good sense of my countrymen for ensuring its favourable reception.

Having thus replied, to the best of my power, to the first class of your objections, or at least having shown my resolution to overleap the barriers which your prudence has raised, I will be brief in noticing that which is more peculiar to myself. It seemed to be your opinion that the very office of an antiquary, employed in grave, and, as the vulgar will sometime allege, in toilsome and minute research, must be considered as incapacitating him from successfully compounding a tale of this sort. But permit me to say, my dear Doctor, that this objection is rather formal than substantial. It is true, that such slighter compositions might not suit the severer genius of our friend Mr. Oldbuck. Yet Horace Walpole wrote a goblin tale which has thrilled through many a bosom; and George Ellis could transfer all the playful fascination of a humour as delightful as it was uncommon into his *Abridgment of the Ancient Metrical Romances*. So that, however I may have occasion to rue my present audacity, I have at least some most respectable precedents in my favour.

Still, the severer antiquary may think that, by thus intermingling fiction with truth, I am polluting the well of history with modern inventions, and impressing on the rising generation false ideas of the age which I describe. I cannot but in some sense admit the force of this reasoning, which I yet hope to traverse by the following consideration.

It is true, that I neither can nor do pretend to the observation of complete accuracy, even in matters of outward costume, much less in the more important points of language and manners. But the same motive which prevents my writing the dialogue of the piece in Anglo-Saxon or in Norman-French, and which prohibits my sending forth to the public this essay painted with the types of Caxton or Wynken de Worde, prevents my attempting to confine myself within the limits of the period in which my story is laid. It is necessary, for example, the interest of any kind, that the subject assumes a shape which it were, translated into the manners, as well as the language of the age we live in. No fascination has ever been attracted to Oriental literature equal to that produced by Mr. Galland's best translation of the *Arabian Tales*; in which, retaining on the one hand the splendour of Eastern costume, and on the other the wildness of Eastern fiction, he mixed these with just so much ordinary feeling and expression as rendered them interesting

and intelligible, while he abridged the long-winded natives, curtailed the monotonous reflections, and rejected the endless repetitions of the Arabian original. The tales, therefore, though less pure¹ Oriental than in their first concoction, were eminently better fitted for the European market, and obtained an unrivalled degree of public favour, which they certainly would never have gained had not the manners and style been in some degree familiarised to the feelings and habits of the western reader.

In point of justice, therefore, to the multitudes who will, I trust, devour this book with avidity, I have so far explained our ancient manners in modern language, and so far detailed the characters and sentiments of my persons, that the modern reader will not find himself, I should hope, much trammelled by the repulsive dryness of mere antiquity. In this, I respectfully contend, I have in no respect exceeded the fair license due to the author of a fictitious composition. The late ingenious Mr. Strutt, in his romance of *Queenhoo Hall*,¹ acted upon another principle; and in distinguishing between what was ancient and modern, forgot, as it appears to me, that extensive neutral ground, the large proportion, that is, of manners and sentiments which are common to us and to our ancestors, having been handed down unaltered from them to us, or which, arising out of the principles of our common nature, must have existed alike in either state of society. In this manner, a man of talent, and of great antiquarian erudition, limited the popularity of his work by excluding from it everything which was not sufficiently obsolete to be altogether forgotten and unintelligible.

The license which I would here indicate is so necessary to the execution of my plan, that I will crave your patience while I illustrate my argument a little farther.

He who first opens Chaucer, or any other ancient poet, is so much struck with the obsolete spelling, multiplied consonants, and antiquated appearance of the language, that he is apt to lay the work down in despair, as encrusted too deep with the rust of antiquity to permit his judging of its merits or tasting its beauties. But if some intelligent and accomplished friend points out to him that the difficulties by which he is startled are more in appearance than reality, if, by reading aloud to him, or by reducing the ordinary words to the modern orthog-

¹ The author had revised this posthumous work of Mr. Strutt. See Appendix to General Preface to the present edition, *Waverley*, p. 459.

raphy, he satisfies his promelyte that only about one-tenth part of the words employed are in fact obsolete, the novice may be easily persuaded to approach the 'well of English undefiled,' with the certainty that a slender degree of patience will enable him to enjoy both the humour and the pathos with which old Geoffrey delighted the age of Cressy and of Poitiers.

To pursue this a little farther. If our neophyte, strong in the new-born love of antiquity, were to undertake to imitate what he had learnt to admire, it must be allowed he would act very injudiciously if he were to select from the glossary the obsolete words which it contains, and employ those, exclusive of all phrases and vocables retained in modern days. This was the error of the unfortunate Chatterton. In order to give his language the appearance of antiquity, he rejected every word that was modern, and produced a dialect entirely different from any that had ever been spoken in Great Britain. He who would imitate an ancient language with success must attend rather to its grammatical character, turn of expression, and mode of arrangement, than labour to collect extraordinary and antiquated words, which, as I have already averred, do not in ancient authors approach the number of words still in use, though perhaps somewhat altered in sense and spelling, in the proportion of one to ten.

What I have applied to language, is still more justly applicable to sentiments and manners. The passions, the sources from which these must spring in all their modifications, are generally the same in all ranks and conditions, all countries and ages; and it follows as a matter of course that the opinions, habits of thinking, and actions, however influenced by the peculiar state of society, must still, upon the whole, bear a strong resemblance to each other. Our ancestors were not more distinct from us, surely, than Jews are from Christians; they had 'eyes, hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions'; were 'fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer,' as ourselves. The tenor, therefore, of their affections and feelings must have borne the same general proportion to our own.

It follows, therefore, that of the materials which an author has to use in a romance, or fictitious composition, such as I have ventured to attempt, he will find that a great proportion, both of language and manners, is as proper to the present time as to those in which he has laid his time of action. The freedom

of choice which this allows him is therefore much greater, and the difficulty of his task much more diminished, than at first appears. To take an illustration from a sister art, the antiquarian details may be said to represent the peculiar features of a landscape under delineation of the pencil. His feudal tower must arise in due majesty; the figures which he introduces must have the costume and character of their age; the piece must represent the peculiar features of the scene which he has chosen for his subject, with all its appropriate elevation of rock, or precipitate descent of cataract. His general colouring, too, must be copied from Nature. The sky must be clouded or serene, according to the climate, and the general tints must be those which prevail in a natural landscape. So far the painter is bound down by the rules of his art to a precise imitation of the features of Nature; but it is not required that he should descend to copy all her more minute features, or represent with absolute exactness the very herbs, flowers, and trees with which the spot is decorated. These, as well as all the more minute points of light and shadow, are attributes proper to scenery in general, natural to each situation, and subject to the artist's disposal, as his taste or pleasure may dictate.

It is true, that this license is confined in either case within legitimate bounds. The painter must introduce no ornament inconsistent with the climate or country of his landscape; he must not plant cypress trees upon Inch Merrin, or Scots firs among the ruins of Persepolis; and the author lies under a corresponding restraint. However far he may venture in a more full detail of passions and feelings than is to be found in the ancient compositions which he imitates, he must introduce nothing inconsistent with the manners of the age. His knights, squires, grooms, and yeomen may be more fully drawn than in the hard, dry delineations of an ancient illuminated manuscript; but the character and costume of the age must remain inviolate: they must be the same figures, drawn by a better pencil, or, to speak more modestly, executed in an age when the principles of art were better understood. His language must not be exclusively obsolete and unintelligible; but he should admit, if possible, no word or turn of phraseology betraying an origin directly modern. It is one thing to make use of the language and sentiments which are common to ourselves and our forefathers, and it is another to invest them with the sentiments and dialect exclusively proper to their descendants.

This, my dear friend, I have found the most difficult part of

my task ; and, to speak frankly, I hardly expect to satisfy your less partial judgment, and more extensive knowledge of such subjects, since I have hardly been able to please my own.

I am conscious that I shall be found still more faulty in the tone of keeping and costume, by those who may be disposed rigidly to examine my Tale, with reference to the manners or the exact period in which my actors flourished. It may be, that I have introduced little which can positively be termed modern ; but, on the other hand, it is extremely probable that I may have confused the manners of two or three centuries, and introduced, during the reign of Richard the First, circumstances appropriated to a period either considerably earlier or a good deal later than that era. It is my comfort, that errors of this kind will escape the general class of readers, and that I may share in the ill-deserved applause of those architects who, in their modern Gothic, do not hesitate to introduce, without rule or method, ornaments proper to different styles and to different periods of the art. Those, whose extensive researches have given them the means of judging my backslidings with more severity, will probably be lenient in proportion to their knowledge of the difficulty of my task. My honest and neglected friend, Ingulphus, has furnished me with many a valuable hint ; but the light afforded by the Monk of Croydon, and Geoffrey de Vinsauf, is dimmed by such a conglomeration of uninteresting and unintelligible matter, that we gladly fly for relief to the delightful pages of the gallant Froissart, although he flourished at a period so much more remote from the date of my history. If, therefore, my dear friend, you have generosity enough to pardon the presumptuous attempt to frame for myself a minstrel coronet, partly out of the pearls of pure antiquity, and partly from the Bristol stones and paste with which I have endeavoured to imitate them, I am convinced your opinion of the difficulty of the task will reconcile you to the imperfect manner of its execution.

Of my materials I have but little to say. They may be chiefly found in the singular Anglo-Norman MS. which Sir Arthur Wardour preserves with such jealous care in the third drawer of his oaken cabinet, scarcely allowing any one to touch it, and being himself not able to read one syllable of its contents. I should never have got his consent, on my visit to Scotland, to read in those precious pages for so many hours, had I not promised to designate it by some emphatic mode of printing, as *The Wardour Manuscript* ; giving it, thereby, an

individuality as important as the Bannatyne MS., the Auchinleck MS., and any other monument of the patience of a Gothic scrivener. I have sent, for your private consideration, a list of the contents of this curious piece, which I shall perhaps subjoin, with your approbation, to the third volume of my Tale, in case the printer's devil should continue impatient for copy, when the whole of my narrative has been imposed.

Adieu, my dear friend; I have said enough to explain, if not to vindicate, the attempt which I have made, and which, in spite of your doubts and my own incapacity, I am still willing to believe has not been altogether made in vain.

I hope you are now well recovered from your spring fit of the gout, and shall be happy if the advice of your learned physician should recommend a tour to these parts. Several curiosities have been lately dug up near the wall, as well as at the ancient station of Habitancum. Talking of the latter, I suppose you have long since heard the news that a sulky, churlish boor has destroyed the ancient statue, or rather bas-relief, popularly called Robin of Redesdale. It seems Robin's fame attracted more visitants than was consistent with the growth of the heather, upon a moor worth a shilling an acre. Reverend as you write yourself, be revengeful for once, and pray with me that he may be visited with such a fit of the stone as if he had all the fragments of poor Robin in that region of his viscera where the disease holds its seat. Tell this not in Gath, lest the Scots rejoice that they have at length found a parallel instance among their neighbours to that barbarous deed which demolished Arthur's Oven. But there is no end to lamentation, when we betake ourselves to such subjects. My respectful compliments attend Miss Dryasdust; I endeavoured to match the spectacles agreeable to her commission, during my late journey to London, and hope she has received them safe, and found them satisfactory. I send this by the blind carrier, so that probably it may be some time upon its journey.¹ The last news which I hear from Edinburgh

¹ This anticipation proved but too true, as my learned correspondent did not receive my letter until a twelvemonth after it was written. I mention this circumstance, that a gentleman attached to the cause of learning, who now holds the principal control of the post-office, may consider whether, by some mitigation of the present enormous rates, some favour might not be shown to the correspondents of the principal Literary and Antiquarian Societies. I understand, indeed, that this experiment was once tried, but that the mail-coach having broke down under the weight of packages addressed to members of the Society of Antiquaries, it was relinquished as a hazardous experiment. Surely, however, it would be possible to build these vehicles in a form more substantial, stronger in the perch, and broader in the wheels, so as to support the

INTRODUCTION TO IVANHOE

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is, that the gentleman who fills the situation of Secretary to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland¹ is the best amateur draftsman in that kingdom, and that much is expected from his skill and zeal in delineating those specimens of national antiquity which are either mouldering under the slow touch of time, or swept away by modern taste, with the same besom of destruction which John Knox used at the Reformation. Once more adieu ; *vale tandem, non immemor mei*. Believe me to be,

Reverend, and very dear Sir,

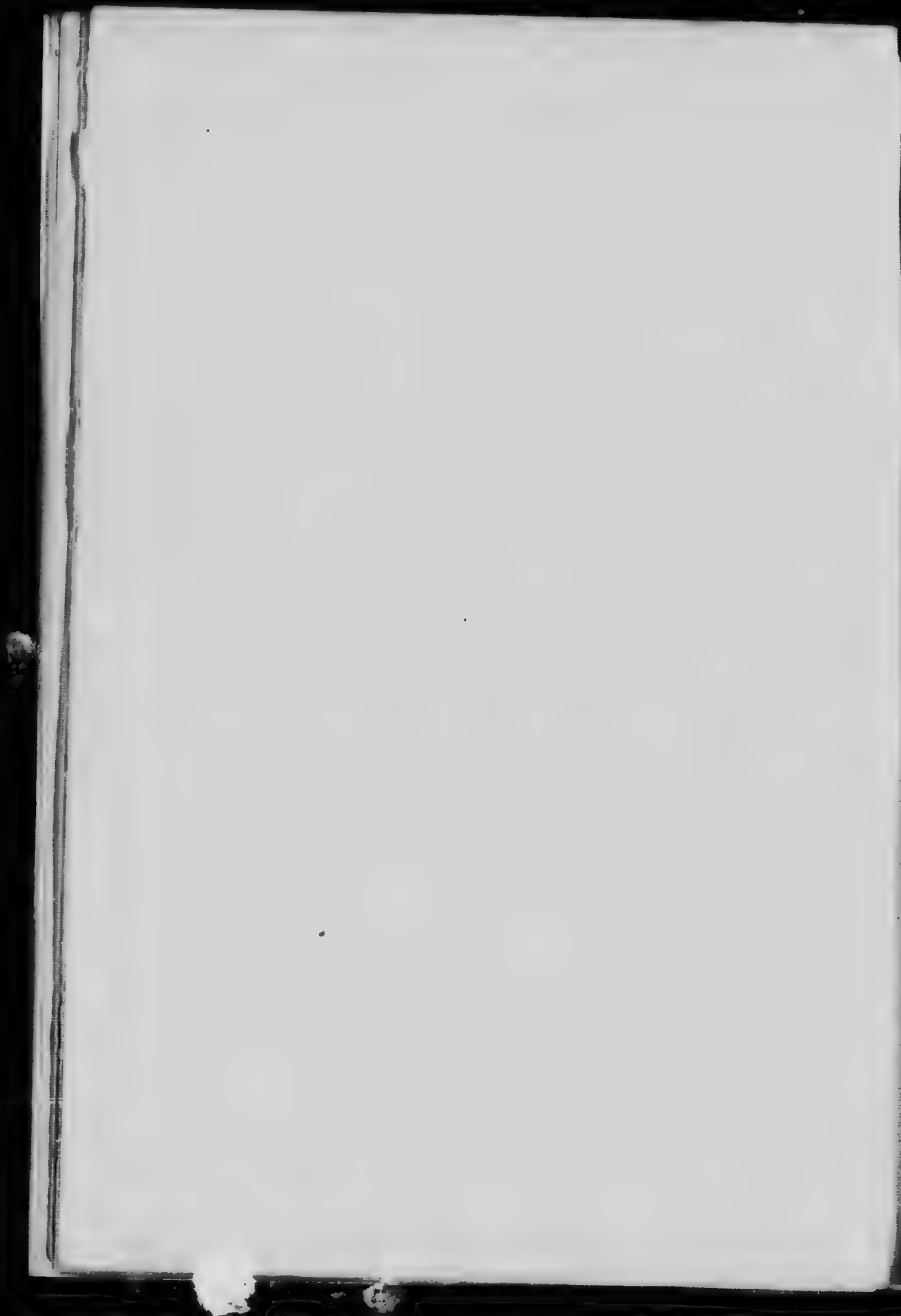
Your most faithful humble Servant,

LAURENCE TEMPLETON.

TOPPINGWOLD, NEAR EGREMONT,
CUMBERLAND, Nov. 17, 1817.

weight of antiquarian learning : when, if they should be found to travel more slowly, they would be not the less agreeable to quiet travellers like myself. —
L. T.

¹ Mr. Skene of Rubislaw is here intimated, to whose taste and skill the Author is indebted for a series of etchings, exhibiting the various localities alluded to in these novels. [1829.]



IVANHOE

CHAPTER I

Thus communed these ; while to their lowly dome
The full-fed swine return'd with evening home,
Compell'd, reluctant, to the several sties,
With din obstreperous and ungrateful cries.

POPE'S *Odyneey*.

IN that pleasant district of merry England which is watered by the river Don, there extended in ancient times a large forest, covering the greater part of the beautiful hills and valleys which lie between Sheffield and the pleasant town of Doncaster. The remains of this extensive wood are still to be seen at the noble seats of Wentworth, of Wharnccliffe Park, and around Rotherham. Here haunted of yore the fabulous Dragon of Wantley ; here were fought many of the most desperate battles during the Civil Wars of the Roses ; and here also flourished in ancient times those bands of gallant outlaws whose deeds have been rendered so popular in English song.

Such being our chief scene, the date of our story refers to a period towards the end of the reign of Richard I., when his return from his long captivity had become an event rather wished than hoped for by his despairing subjects, who were in the meantime subjected to every species of subordinate oppression. The nobles, whose power had become exorbitant during the reign of Stephen, and whom the prudence of Henry the Second had scarce reduced into some degree of subjection to the crown, had now resumed their ancient license in its utmost extent ; despising the feeble interference of the English Council of State, fortifying their castles, increasing the number of their dependants, reducing all around them to a state of vassalage, and striving by every means in their power to place themselves

each at the head of such forces as might enable him to make a figure in the national convulsions which appeared to be impending.

The situation of the inferior gentry, or franklins, as they were called, who, by the law and spirit of the English constitution, were entitled to hold themselves independent of feudal tyranny, became now unusually precarious. If, as was most generally the case, they placed themselves under the protection of any of the petty king in their vicinity, accepted of feudal offices in his household, or bound themselves, by mutual treaties of alliance and protection, to support him in his enterprises, they might indeed purchase temporary repose; but it must be with the sacrifice of that independence which was so dear to every English bosom, and at the certain hazard of being involved as a party in whatever rash expedition the ambition of their protector might lead him to undertake. On the other hand, such and so multiplied were the means of vexation and oppression possessed by the great barons, that they never wanted the pretext, and seldom the will, to harass and pursue, even to the very edge of destruction, any of their less powerful neighbours who attempted to separate themselves from their authority, and to trust for their protection, during the dangers of the times, to their own inoffensive conduct and to the laws of the land.

A circumstance which greatly tended to enhance the tyranny of the nobility and the sufferings of the inferior classes arose from the consequences of the Conquest by Duke William of Normandy. Four generations had not sufficed to blend the hostile blood of the Normans and Anglo-Saxons, or to unite, by common language and mutual interests, two hostile races, one of which still felt the elation of triumph, while the other groaned under all the consequences of defeat. The power had been completely placed in the hands of the Norman nobility by the event of the battle of Hastings, and it had been used, as our histories assure us, with no moderate hand. The whole race of Saxon princes and nobles had been extirpated or disinherited, with few or no exceptions; nor were the numbers great who possessed land in the country of their fathers, even as proprietors of the second or of yet inferior classes. The royal policy had long been to weaken, by every means, legal or illegal, the strength of a part of the population which was justly considered as nourishing the most inveterate antipathy to their victor. All the monarchs of the Norman race had

shown the most marked predilection for their Norman subjects; the laws of the chase, and many others, equally unknown to the milder and more free spirit of the Saxon constitution, had been fixed upon the necks of the subjugated inhabitants, to add weight, as it were, to the feudal chains with which they were loaded. At court, and in the castles of the great nobles, where the pomp and state of a court was emulated, Norman-French was the only language employed; in courts of law, the pleadings and judgments were delivered in the same tongue. In short, French was the language of honour, of chivalry, and even of justice, while the far more manly and expressive Anglo-Saxon was abandoned to the use of rustics and hinds, who knew no other. Still, however, the necessary intercourse between the lords of the soil, and those oppressed inferior beings by whom that soil was cultivated, occasioned the gradual formation of a dialect, compounded betwixt the French and the Anglo-Saxon, in which they could render themselves mutually intelligible to each other; and from this necessity arose by degrees the structure of our present English language, in which the speech of the victors and the vanquished have been so happily blended together; and which has since been so richly improved by importations from the classical languages, and from those spoken by the southern nations of Europe.

This state of things I have thought it necessary to premise for the information of the general reader, who might be apt to forget that, although no great historical events, such as war or insurrection, mark the existence of the Anglo-Saxons as a separate people subsequent to the reign of William the Second, yet the great national distinctions betwixt them and their conquerors, the recollection of what they had formerly been, and to what they were now reduced, continued, down to the reign of Edward the Third, to keep open the wounds which the Conquest had inflicted, and to maintain a line of separation betwixt the descendants of the victor Normans and the vanquished Saxons.

The sun was setting upon one of the rich glassy glades of that forest which we have mentioned in the beginning of the chapter. Hundreds of broad-headed, short-stemmed, wide-branched oaks, which had witnessed perhaps the stately march of the Roman soldiery, flung their gnarled arms over a thick carpet of the most delicious greensward; in some places they were intermingled with beeches, hollies, and copsewood of

various descriptions, so closely as totally to intercept the level beams of the sinking sun; in others they receded from each other, forming those long sweeping vistas in the intricacy of which the eye delights to lose itself, while imagination considers them as the paths to yet wilder scenes of silvan solitude. Here the red rays of the sun shot a broken and discoloured light, that partially hung upon the shattered boughs and mossy trunks of the trees, and there they illuminated in brilliant patches the portions of turf to which they made their way. A considerable open space, in the midst of this glade, seemed formerly to have been dedicated to the rites of Druidical superstition; for, on the summit of a hillock, so regular as to seem artificial, there still remained part of a circle of rough, unhewn stones, of large dimensions. Seven stood upright; the rest had been dislodged from their places, probably by the zeal of some convert to Christianity, and lay, some prostrate near their former site, and others on the side of the hill. One large stone only had found its way to the bottom, and, in stopping the course of a small brook which glided smoothly round the foot of the eminence, gave, by its opposition, a feeble voice of murmur to the placid and elsewhere silent streamlet.

The human figures which completed this landscape were in number two, partaking, in their dress and appearance, of that wild and rustic character which belonged to the woodlands of the West Riding of Yorkshire at that early period. The eldest of these men had a stern, savage, and wild aspect. His garment was of the simplest form imaginable, being a close jacket with sleeves, composed of the tanned skin of some animal, on which the hair had been originally left, but which had been worn off in so many places that it would have been difficult to distinguish, from the patches that remained, to what creature the fur had belonged. This primeval vestment reached from the throat to the knees, and served at once all the usual purposes of body-clothing; there was no wider opening at the collar than was necessary to admit the passage of the head, from which it may be inferred that it was put on by slipping it over the head and shoulders, in the manner of a modern shirt, or ancient hauberk. Sandals, bound with thongs made of boar's hide, protected the feet, and a roll of thin leather was twined artificially around the legs, and, ascending above the calf, left the knees bare, like those of a Scottish Highlander. To make the jacket sit yet more close to the body, it was gathered at the middle by a broad leathern belt, secured by a

brass buckle ; to one side of which was attached a sort of scrip, and to the other a ram's horn, accoutred with a mouthpiece, for the purpose of blowing. In the same belt was stuck one of those long, broad, sharp-pointed, and two-edged knives, with a buck's-horn handle, which were fabricated in the neighbourhood, and bore even at this early period the name of a Sheffield whittle. The man had no covering upon his head, which was only defended by his own thick hair, matted and twisted together, and scorched by the influence of the sun into a rusty dark-red colour, forming a contrast with the overgrown beard upon his cheeks, which was rather of a yellow or amber hue. One part of his dress only remains, but it is too remarkable to be suppressed ; it was a brass ring, resembling a dog's collar, but without any opening, and soldered fast round his neck, so loose as to form no impediment to his breathing, yet so tight as to be incapable of being removed, excepting by the use of the file. On this singular gorget was engraved, in Saxon characters, an inscription of the following purport : — ' Gurth, the son of Beowulph, is the born thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood.'

Beside the swineherd, for such was Gurth's occupation, was seated, upon one of the fallen Druidical monuments, a person about ten years younger in appearance, and whose dress, though resembling his companion's in form, was of better materials, and of a more fantastic appearance. His jacket had been stained of a bright purple hue, upon which there had been some attempt to paint grotesque ornaments in different colours. To the jacket he added a short cloak, which scarcely reached half-way down his thigh ; it was of crimson cloth, though a good deal soiled, lined with bright yellow ; and as he could transfer it from one shoulder to the other, or at his pleasure draw it all around him, its width, contrasted with its want of longitude, formed a fantastic piece of drapery. He had thin silver bracelets upon his arms, and on his neck a collar of the same metal, bearing the inscription, ' Wamba, the son of Witless, is the thrall of Cedric of Rotherwood.' This personage had the same sort of sandals with his companion, but instead of the roll of leather thong, his legs were cased in a sort of gaiters, of which one was red and the other yellow. He was provided also with a cap, having around it more than one bell, about the size of those attached to hawks, which jingled as he turned his head to one side or other ; and as he seldom remained a minute in the same posture, the sound might be considered as incessant.

Around the edge of this cap was a stiff bandeau of leather, cut at the top into open work, resembling a coronet, while a prolonged bag arose from within it, and fell down on one shoulder like an old-fashioned nightcap, or a jelly-bag, or the head-gear of a modern hussar. It was to this part of the cap that the bells were attached; which circumstance, as well as the shape of his head-dress, and his own half-crazed, half-cunning expression of countenance, sufficiently pointed him out as belonging to the race of domestic clowns or jesters, maintained in the houses of the wealthy, to help away the tedium of those lingering hours which they were obliged to spend within doors. He bore, like his companion, a scrip attached to his belt, but had neither horn nor knife, being probably considered as belonging to a class whom it is esteemed dangerous to entrust with edge-tools. In place of these, he was equipped with a sort of sword of lath, resembling that with which harlequin operates his wonders upon the modern stage.

The outward appearance of these two men formed scarce a stronger contrast than their look and demeanour. That of the serf, or bondsman, was sad and sullen; his aspect was bent on the ground with an appearance of deep dejection, which might be almost construed into apathy, had not the fire which occasionally sparkled in his red eye manifested that there slumbered, under the appearance of sullen despondency, a sense of oppression, and a disposition to resistance. The looks of Wamba, on the other hand, indicated, as usual with his class, a sort of vacant curiosity, and fidgety impatience of any posture of repose, together with the utmost self-satisfaction respecting his own situation and the appearance which he made. The dialogue which they maintained between them was carried on in Anglo-Saxon, which, as we said before, was universally spoken by the inferior classes, excepting the Norman soldiers and the immediate personal dependants of the great feudal nobles. But to give their conversation in the original would convey but little information to the modern reader, for whose benefit we beg to offer the following translation:—

‘The curse of St. Withold upon these infernal porkers!’ said the swineherd, after blowing his horn obstreperously, to collect together the scattered herd of swine, which, answering his call with notes equally melodious, made, however, no haste to remove themselves from the luxurious banquet of beech-mast and acorns on which they had fattened, or to forsake the marshy banks of the rivulet, where several of them, half-

plunged in mud, lay stretched at their ease, altogether regardless of the voice of their keeper. 'The curse of St. Withold upon them and upon me !' said Gurth ; ' if the two-legged wolf snap not up some of them ere nightfall, I am no true man. Here, Fangs ! Fangs !' he ejaculated at the top of his voice to a ragged, wolfish-looking dog, a sort of lurcher, half mastiff, half greyhound, which ran limping about as if with the purpose of seconding his master in collecting the refractory grunTERS ; but which, in fact, from misapprehension of the swineherd's signals, ignorance of his own duty, or malice prepense, only drove them hither and thither, and increased the evil which he seemed to design to remedy. ' A devil draw the teeth of him,' said Gurth, ' and the mother of mischief confound the ranger of the forest, that cuts the fore-claws off our dogs, and makes them unfit for their trade !' Wamba, up and help me an thou beest a man ; take a turn round the back o' the hill to gain the wind on them ; and when thou'st got the weather-gage, thou mayst drive them before thee as gently as so many innocent lambs.'

' Truly,' said Wamba, without stirring from the spot, ' I have consulted my legs upon this matter, and they are altogether of opinion that to carry my gay garments through these sloughs would be an act of unfriendship to my sovereign person and royal wardrobe ; wherefore, Gurth, I advise thee to call off Fangs, and leave the herd to their destiny, which, whether they meet with bands of travelling soldiers, or of outlaws, or of wandering pilgrims, can be little else than to be converted into Normans before morning, to thy no small ease and comfort.'

' The swine turned Normans to my comfort !' quoth Gurth ; ' expound that to me, Wamba, for my brain is too dull and my mind too vexed to read riddles.'

' Why, how call you those grunting brutes running about on their four legs ?' demanded Wamba.

' Swine, fool — swine,' said the herd ; ' every fool knows that.'

' And swine is good Saxon,' said the Jester ; ' but how call you the sow when she is flayed, and drawn, and quartered, and hung up by the heels, like a traitor ?'

' Pork,' answered the swinehead.

' I am very glad every fool knows that too,' said Wamba, ' and pork, I think, is good Norman-French ; and so when the brute lives, and is in the charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her

¹ See Note 1.

Saxon name; but becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is carried to the castle hall to feast among the nobles. What dost thou think of this, friend Gurth, ha ?

'It is but too true doctrine, friend Wamba, however it got into thy fool's pate.'

'Nay, I can tell you more,' said Wamba in the same tone: 'there is old Alderman Ox continues to hold his Saxon epithet while he is under the charge of serfs and bondsmen such as thou, but becomes Beef, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him. Mynherr Calf, too, becomes Monsieur de Veau in the like manner: he is Saxon when he requires tendance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes matter of enjoyment.'

'By St. Dunstan,' answered Gurth, 'thou speakest but sad truths; little is left to us but the air we breathe, and that appears to have been reserved with much hesitation, solely for the purpose of enabling us to endure the tasks they lay upon our shoulders. The finest and the fattest is for their board; the loveliest is for their couch; the best and bravest supply their foreign masters with soldiers, and whiten distant lands with their bones, leaving few here who have either will or the power to protect the unfortunate Saxon. God's blessing on our Master Cedric, he hath done the work of a man in standing in the gap; but Reginald Front-de-Bœuf is coming down to this country in person, and we shall soon see how little Cedric's trouble will avail him. Here, here,' he exclaimed again, raising his voice, 'So ho! so ho! well done, Fangs! thou hast them all before thee now, and bring'st them on bravely, lad.'

'Gurth,' said the Jester, 'I know thou thinkest me a fool, or thou wouldst not be so rash in putting thy head into my mouth. One word to Reginald Front-de-Bœuf or Philip de Malvoisin, that thou hast spoken treason against the Norman — and thou art but a castaway swineherd; thou wouldst waver on one of these trees as a terror to all evil speakers against dignities.'

'Dog, thou wouldst not betray me,' said Gurth, 'after having led me on to speak so much at disadvantage?'

'Betray thee!' answered the Jester; 'no, that were the trick of a wise man; a fool cannot half so well help himself. But soft, whom have we here?' he said, listening to the trampling of several horses which became then audible.

'Never mind whom,' answered Gurth, who had now got his herd before him, and, with the aid of Fangs, was driving them

down one of the long dim vistas which we have endeavoured to describe.

'Nay, but I must see the riders,' answered Wamba; 'perhaps they are come from Fairyland with a message from King Oberon.'

'A murrain take thee!' rejoined the swineherd; 'wilt thou talk of such things, while a terrible storm of thunder and lightning is raging within a few miles of us? Hark, how the thunder rumbles! and for summer rain, I never saw such broad downright flat drops fall out of the clouds; the oaks, too, notwithstanding the calm weather, sob and creak with their great boughs as if announcing a tempest. Thou canst play the rational if thou wilt; credit me for once, and let us home ere the storm begins to rage, for the night will be fearful.'

Wamba seemed to feel the force of this appeal, and accompanied his companion, who began his journey after catching up a long quarter-staff which lay upon the grass beside him. This second Eumæus strode hastily down the forest glade, driving before him, with the assistance of Fangs, the whole herd of his inharmonious charge.

CHAPTER II

A monk there was, a fayre for the maistrie,
An oute der that loved venerie ;
A manly man, to be an abbot able,
Fully many a daintie horse had he in stable,
And whan he rode, men might his bridle hear
Cingeling in a whistling wind as clear,
And eke as loud, as doth the chapell bell,
There as this lord was keeper of the cell.

CHAUCER.

NOTWITHSTANDING the occasional exhortation and chiding of his companion, the noise of the horsemen's feet continuing to approach, Wamba could not be prevented from lingering occasionally on the road, upon every pretence which occurred ; now catching from the hazel a cluster of half-ripe nuts, and now turning his head to leer after a cottage maiden who crossed their path. The horsemen, therefore, soon overtook them on the road.

Their numbers amounted to ten men, of whom the two who rode foremost seemed to be persons of considerable importance, and the others their attendants. It was not difficult to ascertain the condition and character of one of these personages. He was obviously an ecclesiastic of high rank ; his dress was that of a Cistercian monk, but composed of materials much finer than those which the rule of that order admitted. His mantle and hood were of the best Flanders cloth, and fell in ample, and not ungraceful, folds around a handsome though somewhat corpulent person. His countenance bore as little the marks of self-denial as his habit indicated contempt of worldly splendour. His features might have been called good, had there not lurked under the penthouse of his eye that sly epicurean twinkle which indicates the cautious voluptuary. In other respects, his profession and situation had taught him a ready command over his countenance, which he could

contract a pleasure into solemnity, although its natural expression was that of good-humoured social indulgence. In defiance of conventual rules and the edicts of popes and councils, the sleeves of this dignitary were lined and turned up with rich furs, his mantle secured at the throat with a golden clasp, and the whole dress proper to his order as much refined upon and ornamented as that of a Quaker beauty of the present day, who, while she retains the garb and costume of her sect, continues to give to its simplicity, by the choice of materials and the mode of disposing them, a certain air of coquettish attraction savouring but too much of the vanities of the world.

This worthy churchman rode upon a well-fed, ambling mule, whose furniture was highly decorated, and whose bridle, according to the fashion of the day, was ornamented with silver bells. In his seat he had nothing of the awkwardness of the convent, but displayed the easy and habitual grace of a well-trained horseman. Indeed, it seemed that so humble a conveyance as a mule, in however good case, and however well broken to a pleasant and accommodating amble, was only used by the gallant monk for travelling on the road. A lay brother, one of those who followed in the train, had, for his use on other occasions, one of the most handsome Spanish jennets ever bred in Andalusia, which merchants used at that time to import, with great trouble and risk, for the use of persons of wealth and distinction. The saddle and housings of this superb palfrey were covered by a long foot-cloth, which reached nearly to the ground, and on which were richly embroidered mitres, crosses, and other ecclesiastical emblems. Another lay brother led a sumpter mule, loaded probably with his superior's baggage; and two monks of his own order, of inferior station, rode together in the rear, laughing and conversing with each other, without taking much notice of the other members of the cavalcade.

The companion of the church dignitary was a man past forty, thin, strong, tall, and muscular; an athletic figure, which long fatigue and constant exercise seemed to have left none of the softer part of the human form, having reduced the whole to brawn, bones, and sinews, which had sustained a thousand toils, and were ready to dare a thousand more. His head was covered with a scarlet cap, faced with fur, of that kind which the French call *mortier*, from its resemblance to the shape of an inverted mortar. His countenance was there-

fore fully displayed, and its expression was calculated to impress a degree of awe, if not of fear, upon strangers. High features, naturally strong and powerfully expressive, had been burnt almost into Negro blackness by constant exposure to the tropical sun, and might, in their ordinary state, be said to slumber after the storm of passion had passed away; but the projection of the veins of the forehead, the readiness with which the upper lip and its thick black moustaches quivered upon the slightest emotion, plainly intimated that the tempest might be again and easily awakened. His keen, piercing, dark eyes told in every glance a history of difficulties subdued and dangers dared, and seemed to challenge opposition to his wishes, for the pleasure of sweeping it from his road by a determined exertion of courage and of will; a deep scar on his brow gave additional sternness to his countenance and a sinister expression to one of his eyes, which had been slightly injured on the same occasion, and of which the vision, though perfect, was in a slight and partial degree distorted.

The upper dress of this personage resembled that of his companion in shape, being a long monastic mantle; but the colour, being scarlet, showed that he did not belong to any of the four regular orders of monks. On the right shoulder of the mantle there was cut, in white cloth, a cross of a peculiar form. This upper robe concealed what at first view seemed rather inconsistent with its form, a shirt, namely, of linked mail, with sleeves and gloves of the same, curiously plaited and interwoven, as flexible to the body as those which are now wrought in the stocking-loom out of less obdurate materials. The fore-part of his thighs, where the folds of his mantle permitted them to be seen, were also covered with linked mail; the knees and feet were defended by splints, or thin plates of steel, ingeniously jointed upon each other; and hose, reaching from the ankle to the knee, effectually protected the legs, and completed the rider's defensive armour. girdle he wore a long and double-edged dagger, which was the only offensive weapon about his person.

He rode, not a mule, like his companion, but a strong hackney for the road, to save his gallant war-horse, which a squire led behind, fully accoutred for battle, with a chamfron or plaited head-piece upon his head, having a short spike projecting from the front. On one side of the saddle hung a short battle-axe, richly inlaid with Damascene carving; on the other the rider's plumed head-piece and hood of mail, with

a long two-handed sword, used by the chivalry of the period. A second squire held aloft his master's lance, from the extremity of which fluttered a small banderole, or streamer, bearing a cross of the same form with that embroidered upon his cloak. He also carried his small triangular shield, broad enough at the top to protect the breast, and from thence diminishing to a point. It was covered with a scarlet cloth, which prevented the device from being seen.

These two squires were followed by two attendants, whose dark visages, white turbans, and the Oriental form of their garments, showed them to be natives of some distant Eastern country.¹ The whole appearance of this warrior and his retinue was wild and outlandish; the dress of his squires was gorgeous, and his Eastern attendants wore silver collars round their throats, and bracelets of the same metal upon their swarthy legs and arms, of which the latter were naked from the elbow, and the former from mid-leg to ankle. Silk and embroidery distinguished their dresses, and marked the wealth and importance of their master; forming, at the same time, a striking contrast with the martial simplicity of his own attire. They were armed with crooked sabres, having the hilt and baldric inlaid with gold, and matched with Turkish daggers of yet more costly workmanship. Each of them bore at his saddle-bow a bundle of darts or javelins, about four feet in length, having sharp steel heads, a weapon much in use among the Saracens, and of which the memory is yet preserved in the martial exercise called *el jerrid*, still practised in the Eastern countries.

The steeds of these attendants were in appearance as foreign as their riders. They were of Saracen origin, and consequently of Arabian descent; and their fine slender limbs, small fetlocks, thin manes, and easy springy motion, formed a marked contrast with the large-jointed heavy horses, of which the race was cultivated in Flanders and in Normandy for mounting the men-at-arms of the period in all the panoply of plate and mail, and which, placed by the side of those Eastern coursers, might have passed for a personification of substance and of shadow.

The singular appearance of this cavalcade not only attracted the curiosity of Wamba, but excited even that of his less volatile companion. The monk he instantly knew to be the Prior of Jorvaulx Abbey, well known for many miles around as a

¹ See Negro Slaves. Note 2.

lover of the chase, of the banquet, and, if fame did him not wrong, of other worldly pleasures still more inconsistent with his monastic vows.

Yet so loose were the ideas of the times respecting the conduct of the clergy, whether secular or regular, that the Prior Aymer maintained a fair character in the neighbourhood of his abbey. His free and jovial temper, and the readiness with which he granted absolution from all ordinary delinquencies, rendered him a favourite among the nobility and principal gentry, to several of whom he was allied by birth, being of a distinguished Norman family. The ladies, in particular, were not disposed to scan too nicely the morals of a man who was a professed admirer of their sex, and who possessed many means of dispelling the *ennui* which was too apt to intrude upon the halls and bowers of an ancient feudal castle. The Prior mingled in the sports of the field with more than due eagerness, and was allowed to possess the best-trained hawks and the fleetest greyhounds in the North Riding — circumstances which strongly recommended him to the youthful gentry. With the old he had another part to play, which, when needful, he could sustain with great decorum. His knowledge of books, however superficial, was sufficient to impress upon their ignorance respect for his supposed learning; and the gravity of his deportment and language, with the high tone which he exerted in setting forth the authority of the church and of the priesthood, impressed them no less with an opinion of his sanctity. Even the common people, the severest critics of the conduct of their betters, had commiseration with the follies of Prior Aymer. He was generous; and charity, as it is well known, covereth a multitude of sins, in another sense than that in which it is said to do so in Scripture. The revenues of the monastery, of which a large part was at his disposal, while they gave him the means of supplying his own very considerable expenses, afforded also those largesses which he bestowed among the peasantry, and with which he frequently relieved the distresses of the oppressed. If Prior Aymer rode hard in the chase, or remained long at the banquet, if Prior Aymer was seen at the early peep of dawn to enter the postern of the abbey, as he glided home from some rendezvous which had occupied the hours of darkness, men only shrugged up their shoulders, and reconciled themselves to his irregularities by recollecting that the same were practised by many of his brethren who had no redeeming qualities whatsoever to atone for them. Prior Aymer, there-

fore, and his character, were well known to our Saxon serfs, who made their rude obeisance, and received his '*Benedicite, mes filz*,' in return.

But the singular appearance of his companion and his attendants arrested their attention and excited their wonder, and they could scarcely attend to the Prior of Jorvaulx' question, when he demanded if they knew of any place of harbourage in the vicinity; so much were they surprised at the half-monastic, half-military appearance of the swarthy stranger, and at the uncouth dress and arms of his Eastern attendants. It is probable, too, that the language in which the benediction was conferred, and the information asked, sounded ungracious, though not probably unintelligible, in the ears of the Saxon peasants.

'I asked you, my children,' said the Prior, raising his voice, and using the *lingua Franca*, or mixed language, in which the Norman and Saxon races conversed with each other, 'if there be in this neighbourhood any good man who, for the love of God and devotion to Mother Church, will give two of her humblest servants, with their train, a night's hospitality and refreshment?'

This he spoke with a tone of conscious importance, which formed a strong contrast to the modest terms which he thought it proper to employ.

'Two of the humblest servants of Mother Church!' repeated Wamba to himself, but, fool as he was, taking care not to make his observation audible; 'I should like to see her seneschals, her chief butlers, and her other principal domestics!'

After this internal commentary on the Prior's speech, he raised his eyes and replied to the question which had been put.

'If the reverend fathers,' he said, 'loved good cheer and soft lodging, few miles of riding would carry them to the Priory of Brinxworth, where their quality could not but secure them the most honourable reception; or if they preferred spending a penitential evening, they might turn down yonder wild glade, which would bring them to the hermitage of Copmanhurst, where a pious anchoret would make them sharers for the night of the shelter of his roof and the benefit of his prayers.'

The Prior shook his head at both proposals.

'Mine honest friend,' said he, 'if the jangling of thy bells had not dizzied thine understanding, thou mightest have known *Clericus clericum non decimat*; that is to say, we churchmen do not exhaust each other's hospitality, but rather require that of

the laity, giving them thus an opportunity to serve God in honouring and relieving His appointed servants.'

'It is true,' replied Wamba, 'that I, being but an ass, am, nevertheless, honoured to bear the bells as well as your reverence's mule; notwithstanding, I did conceive that the charity of Mother Church and her servants might be said, with other charity, to begin at home.'

'A truce to thine insolence, fellow,' said the armed rider, breaking in on his prattle with a high and stern voice, 'and tell us, if thou canst, the road to — How call'd you your franklin, Prior Aymer?'

'Cedric,' answered the Prior — 'Cedric the Saxon. Tell me, good fellow, are we near his dwelling, and can you show us the road?'

'The road will be uneasy to find,' answered Gurth, who broke silence for the first time, 'and the family of Cedric retire early to rest.'

'Tush, tell not me, fellow!' said the military rider; 't is easy for them to arise and supply the wants of travellers such as we are, who will not stoop to beg the hospitality which we have a right to command.'

'I know not,' said Gurth, sullenly, 'if I should show the way to my master's house to those who demand as a right the shelter which most are fain to ask as a favour.'

'Do you dispute with me, slave!' said the soldier; and, setting spurs to his horse, he caused him make a demi-volte across the path, raising at the same time the riding rod which he held in his hand, with a purpose of chastising what he considered as the insolence of the peasant.

Gurth darted at him a savage and revengeful scowl, and with a fierce yet hesitating motion laid his hand on the hilt of his knife; but the interference of Prior Aymer, who pushed his mule betwixt his companion and the swineherd, prevented the meditated violence.

'Nay, by St. Mary, brother Brian, you must not think you are now in Palestine, predominating over heathen Turks and infidel Saracens; we islanders love not blows, save those of Holy Church, who chasteneth whom she loveth. Tell me, good fellow,' said he to Wamba, and seconded his speech by a small piece of silver coin, 'the way to Cedric the Saxon's; you cannot be ignorant of it, and it is your duty to direct the wanderer even when his character is less sanctified than ours.'

'In truth, venerable father,' answered the Jester, 'the Saracen head of your right reverend companion has frightened out of mine the way home : I am not sure I shall get there to-night myself.'

'Tush,' said the Abbot, 'thou canst tell us if thou wilt. This reverend brother has been all his life engaged in fighting among the Saracens for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre ; he is of the order of Knights Templars, whom you may have heard of : he is half a monk, half a soldier.'

'If he is but half a monk,' said the Jester, 'he should not be wholly unreasonable with those whom he meets upon the road, even if they should be in no hurry to answer questions that no way concern them.'

'I forgive thy wit,' replied the Abbot, 'on condition thou wilt show me the way to Cedric's mansion.'

'Well, then,' answered Wamba, 'your reverences must hold on this path till you come to a sunken cross, of which scarce a cubit's length remains above ground ; then take the path to the left, for there are four which meet at Sunken Cross, and I trust your reverences will obtain shelter before the storm comes on.'

The Abbot thanked his sage adviser ; and the cavalcade, setting spurs to their horses, rode on as men do who wish to reach their inn before the bursting of a night-storm.

As their horses' hoofs died away, Gurth said to his companion, 'If they follow thy wise direction, the reverend fathers will hardly reach Rotherwood this night.'

'No,' said the Jester, grinning, 'but they may reach Sheffield if they have good luck, and that is as fit a place for them. I am not so bad a woodsman as to show the dog where the deer lies, if I have no mind he should chase him.'

'Thou art right,' said Gurth ; 'it were ill that Aymer saw the Lady Rowena ; and it were worse, it may be, for Cedric to quarrel, as is most likely he would, with this military monk. But, like good servants, let us hear and see, and say nothing.'

We return to the riders, who had soon left the bondsmen far behind them, and who maintained the following conversation in the Norman-French language, usually employed by the superior classes, with the exception of the few who were still inclined to boast their Saxon descent : —

'What mean these fellows by their capricious insolence ?' said the Templar to the Benedictine, 'and why did you prevent me from chastising it ?'

'Marry, brother Brian,' replied the Prior, 'touching the one of them, it were hard for me to render a reason for a fool speaking according to his folly ; and the other churl is of that savage, fierce, intractable race some of whom, as I have often told you, are still to be found among the descendants of the conquered Saxons, and whose supreme pleasure it is to testify, by all means in their power, their aversion to their conquerors.'

'I would soon have beat him into courtesy,' observed Brian ; 'I am accustomed to deal with such spirits. Our Turkish captives are as fierce and intractable as Odin himself could have been ; yet two months in my household, under the management of my master of the slaves, has made them humble, submissive, serviceable, and observant of your will. Marry, sir, you must beware of the poison and the dagger ; for they use either with free will when you give them the slightest opportunity.'

'Ay, but,' answered Prior Aymer, 'every land has its own manners and fashions ; and, besides that beating this fellow could procure us no information respecting the road to Cedric's house, it would have been sure to have established a quarrel betwixt you and him had we found our way thither. Remember what I told you : this wealthy franklin is proud, fierce, jealous, and irritable, a withstander of the nobility, and even of his neighbours, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf and Philip Malvoisin, who are no babes to strive with. He stands up so sternly for the privileges of his race, and is so proud of his uninterrupted descent from Hereward, a renowned champion of the Heph-tarchy, that he is universally called Cedric the Saxon ; and makes a boast of his belonging to a people from whom many others endeavour to hide their descent, lest they should encounter a share of the *ux victis*, or severities imposed upon the vanquished.'

'Prior Aymer,' said the Templar, 'you are a man of gallantry' learned in the study of beauty, and as expert as a troubadour in all matters concerning the *arrêts* of love ; but I shall expect much beauty in this celebrated Rowena, to counterbalance the self-denial and forbearance which I must exert if I am to court the favour of such a seditious churl as you have described her father Cedric.'

'Cedric is not her father,' replied the Prior, 'and is but of remote relation : she is descended from higher blood than even he pretends to, and is but distantly connected with him by birth. Her guardian, however, he is, self-constituted as I believe ; but his ward is as dear to him as if she were his own

child. Of her beauty you shall soon be judge ; and if the purity of her complexion, and the majestic yet soft expression of a mild blue eye, do not chase from your memory the black-tressed girls of Palestine, ay, or the houris of old Mahound's paradise, I am an infidel and no true son of the church.'

'Should your boasted beauty,' said the Templar, 'be weighed in the balance and found wanting, you know our wager?'

'My gold collar,' answered the Prior, 'against ten butts of Chian wine : they are mine as securely as if they were already in the convent vaults, under the key of old Dennis, the cellarer.'

'And I am myself to be the judge,' said the Templar, 'and am only to be convicted on my own admission that I have seen no maiden so beautiful since Pentecost was a twelvemonth. Ran it not so? Prior, your collar is in danger ; I will wear it over my gorget in the lists of Ashby-de-la-Zouche.'

'Win it fairly,' said the Prior, 'and wear it as ye wili ; I will trust your giving true response, on your word as a knight and as a churchman. Yet, brother, take my advice, and file your tongue to a little more courtesy than your habits of predominating over infidel captives and Eastern bondsmen have accustomed you. Cedric the Saxon, if offended — and he is no way slack in taking offence — is a man who, without respect to your knighthood, my high office, or the sanctity of either, would clear his house of us, and send us to lodge with the larks, though the hour were midnight. And be careful how you look on Rowena, whom he cherishes with the most jealous care ; an he take the least alarm in that quarter we are but lost men. It is said he banished his only son from his family for lifting his eyes in the way of affection towards this beauty, who may be worshipped, it seems, at a distance, but is not to be approached with other thoughts than such as we bring to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin.'

'Well, you have said enough,' answered the Templar ; 'I will for a night put on the needful restraint, and deport me as meekly as a maiden ; but as for the fear of his expelling us by violence, myself and squires, with Hamet and Abdella, will warrant you against that disgrace. Doubt not that we shall be strong enough to make good our quarters.'

'We must not let it come so far,' answered the Prior. 'But here is the clown's sunken cross, and the night is so dark that we can hardly see which of the roads we are to follow. He bid us turn, I think, to the left.'

'To the right,' said Brian, 'to the best of my remembrance.'

'To the left — certainly the left; I remember his pointing with his wooden sword.'

'Ay, but he held his sword in his left hand, and so pointed across his body with it,' said the Templar.

Each maintained his opinion with sufficient obstinacy, as is usual in all such cases; the attendants were appealed to, but they had not been near enough to hear Wamba's directions. At length Brian remarked, what had at first escaped him in the twilight — 'Here is some one either asleep or lying dead at the foot of this cross. Hugo, stir him with the butt-end of thy lance.'

This was no sooner done than the figure arose, exclaiming in good French, 'Whosoever thou art, it is discourteous in you to disturb my thoughts.'

'We did but wish to ask you,' said the Prior, 'the road to Rotherwood, the abode of Cedric the Saxon.'

'I myself am bound thither,' replied the stranger; 'and if I had a horse I would be your guide, for the way is somewhat intricate, though perfectly well known to me.'

'Thou shalt have both thanks and reward, my friend,' said the Prior, 'if thou wilt bring us to Cedric's in safety.'

And he caused one of his attendants to mount his own led horse, and give that upon which he had hitherto ridden to the stranger who was to serve for a guide.

Their conductor pursued an opposite road from that which Wamba had recommended for the purpose of misleading them. The path soon led deeper into the woodland, and crossed more than one brook, the approach to which was rendered perilous by the marshes through which it flowed; but the stranger seemed to know, as if by instinct, the soundest ground and the safest points of passage; and, by dint of caution and attention, brought the party safely into a wider avenue than any they had yet seen; and, pointing to a large, low, irregular building at the upper extremity, he said to the Prior, 'Yonder is Rotherwood, the dwelling of Cedric the Saxon.'

This was a joyful intimation to Aymer, whose nerves were none of the strongest, and who had suffered such agitation and alarm in the course of passing through the dangerous bogs, that he had not yet had the curiosity to ask his guide a single question. Finding himself now at his ease and near shelter, his curiosity began to awake, and he demanded of the guide who and what he was.

'A palmer, just returned from the Holy Land,' was the answer.

'You had better have tarried there to fight for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre,' said the Templar.

'True, Reverend Sir Knight,' answered the Palmer, to whom the appearance of the Templar seemed perfectly familiar; 'but when those who are under oath to recover the holy city are found travelling at such a distance from the scene of their duties, can you wonder that a peaceful peasant like me should decline the task which they have abandoned?'

The Templar would have made an angry reply, but was interrupted by the Prior, who again expressed his astonishment that their guide, after such long absence, should be so perfectly acquainted with the passes of the forest.

'I was born a native of these parts,' answered their guide, and as he made the reply they stood before the mansion of Cedric—a low, irregular building, containing several courtyards or inclosures, extending over a considerable space of ground, and which, though its size argued the inhabitant to be a person of wealth, differed entirely from the tall, turreted, and castellated buildings in which the Norman nobility resided, and which had become the universal style of architecture throughout England.

Rotherwood was not, however, without defences; no habitation, in that disturbed period, could have been so without the risk of being plundered and burnt before the next morning. A deep fosse, or ditch, was drawn round the whole building, and filled with water from a neighbouring stream. A double stockade, or palisade, composed of pointed beams, which the adjacent forest supplied, defended the outer and inner bank of the trench. There was an entrance from the west through the outer stockade, which communicated by a drawbridge with a similar opening in the interior defences. Some precautions had been taken to place these entrances under the protection of projecting angles, by which they might be flanked in case of need by archers or slingers.

Before this entrance the Templar wound his horn loudly; for the rain, which had long threatened, began now to descend with great violence.

CHAPTER III

Then (sad relief !) from the bleak coast that hears
The German Ocean roar, deep-blooming, strong,
And yellow-hair'd, the blue-eyed Saxon came.

THOMSON'S *Liberty*.

IN a hall, the height of which was greatly disproportioned to its extreme length and width, a long oaken table formed of planks rough-hewn from the forest, and which had scarcely received any polish, stood ready prepared for the evening meal of Cedric the Saxon. The roof, composed of beams and rafters, had nothing to divide the apartment from the sky excepting the planking and thatch ; there was a huge fireplace at either end of the hall, but, as the chimneys were constructed in a very clumsy manner, at least as much of the smoke found its way into the apartment as escaped by the proper vent. The constant vapour which this occasioned had polished the rafters and beams of the low-browed hall, by encrusting them with a black varnish of soot. On the sides of the apartment hung implements of war and of the chase, and there were at each corner folding doors, which gave access to other parts of the extensive building.

The other appointments of the mansion partook of the rude simplicity of the Saxon period, which Cedric piqued himself upon maintaining. The floor was composed of earth mixed with lime, trodden into a hard substance, such as is often employed in flooring our modern barns. For about one quarter of the length of the apartment the floor was raised by a step, and this space, which was called the dais, was occupied only by the principal members of the family and visitors of distinction. For this purpose, a table richly covered with scarlet cloth was placed transversely across the platform, from the middle of which ran the longer and lower board, at which the domestics and inferior persons fed, down towards the bottom of the hall. The whole resembled the form of the letter T, or some of those ancient

dinner-tables which, arranged on the same principles, may be still seen in the antique Colleges of Oxford or Cambridge. Massive chairs and settles of carved oak were placed upon the dais, and over these seats and the more elevated table was fastened a canopy of cloth, which served in some degree to protect the dignitaries who occupied that distinguished station from the weather, and especially from the rain, which in some places found its way through the ill-constructed roof.

The walls of this upper end of the hall, as far as the dais extended, were covered with hangings or curtains, and upon the floor there was a carpet, both of which were adorned with some attempts at tapestry or embroidery, executed with brilliant, or rather gaudy, colouring. Over the lower range of table, the roof, as we have noticed, had no covering; the rough plastered walls were left bare, and the rude earthen floor was uncarpeted; the board was uncovered by a cloth, and rude massive benches supplied the place of chairs.

In the centre of the upper table were placed two chairs more elevated than the rest, for the master and mistress of the family, who presided over the scene of hospitality, and from doing so derived their Saxon title of honour, which signifies 'the Dividers of Bread.'

To each of these chairs was added a footstool, curiously carved and inlaid with ivory, which mark of distinction was peculiar to them. One of these seats was at present occupied by Cedric the Saxon, who, though but in rank a thane, or, as the Normans called him, a franklin, felt at the delay of his evening meal an irritable impatience which might have become an alderman, whether of ancient or of modern times.

It appeared, indeed, from the countenance of this proprietor, that he was of a frank, but hasty and choleric, temper. He was not above the middle stature, but broad-shouldered, long-armed, and powerfully made, like one accustomed to endure the fatigue of war or of the chase; his face was broad, with large blue eyes, open and frank features, fine teeth, and a well-formed head, altogether expressive of that sort of good humour which often lodges with a sudden and hasty temper. Pride and jealousy there was in his eye, for his life had been spent in asserting rights which were constantly liable to invasion; and the prompt, fiery, and resolute disposition of the man had been kept constantly upon the alert by the circumstances of his situation. His long yellow hair was equally divided on the top of his head and upon his brow, and combed down on each

side to the length of his shoulders : it had but little tendency to grey, although Cedric was approaching to his sixtieth year.

His dress was a tunic of forest green, furred at the throat and cuffs with what was called minever — a kind of fur inferior in quality to ermine, and formed, it is believed, of the skin of the grey squirrel. 'This doublet hung unbuttoned over a close dress of scarlet which sate tight to his body ; he had breeches of the same, but they did not reach below the lower part of the thigh, leaving the knee exposed. His feet had sandals of the same fashion with the peasants, but of finer materials, and secured in the front with golden clasps. He had bracelets of gold upon his arms, and a broad collar of the same precious metal around his neck. About his waist he wore a richly studded belt, in which was stuck a short, straight, two-edged sword, with a sharp point, so disposed as to hang almost perpendicularly by his side. Behind his seat was hung a scarlet cloth cloak lined with fur, and a cap of the same materials, richly embroidered, which completed the dress of the opulent landholder when he chose to go forth. A short boar-spear, with a broad and bright steel head, also reclined against the back of his chair, which served him, when he walked abroad, for the purposes of a staff or of a weapon, as chance might require.

Several domestics, whose dress held various proportions betwixt the richness of their master's and the coarse and simple attire of Gurth, the swineherd, watched the looks and waited the commands of the Saxon dignitary. Two or three servants of a superior order stood behind their master upon the dais ; the rest occupied the lower part of the hall. Other attendants there were of a different description : two or three large and shaggy greyhounds, such as were then employed in hunting the stag and wolf ; as many slow-hounds, of a large bony breed, with thick necks, large heads, and long ears ; and one or two of the smaller dogs, now called terriers, which waited with impatience the arrival of the supper ; but, with the sagacious knowledge of physiognomy peculiar to their race, forbore to intrude upon the moody silence of their master, apprehensive probably of a small white truncheon which lay by Cedric's trencher, for the purpose of repelling the advances of his four-legged dependants. One grisly old wolf-dog alone, with the liberty of an indulged favourite, had planted himself close by the chair of state, and occasionally ventured to solicit notice by putting his large hairy head upon his master's knee, or pushing his

nose into his hand. Even he was repelled by the stern command, 'Down, Balder — down! I am not in the humour for foolery.'

In fact, Cedric, as we have observed, was in no very placid state of mind. The Lady Rowena, who had been absent to attend an evening mass at a distant church, had but just returned, and was changing her garments, which had been wetted by the storm. There was as yet no tidings of Gurth, and his charge, which should long since have been driven home from the forest; and such was the insecurity of the period as to render it probable that the delay might be explained by some depredation of the outlaws, with whom the adjacent forest abounded, or by the violence of some neighbouring baron, whose consciousness of strength made him equally negligent of the laws of property. The matter was of consequence, for great part of the domestic wealth of the Saxon proprietors consisted in numerous herds of swine, especially in forest land, where those animals easily found their food.

Besides these subjects of anxiety, the Saxon thane was impatient for the presence of his favourite clown, Wamba, whose jests, such as they were, served for a sort of seasoning to his evening meal, and to the deep draughts of ale and wine with which he was in the habit of accompanying it. Add to all this, Cedric had fasted since noon, and his usual supper hour was long past, a cause of irritation common to country squires, both in ancient and modern times. His displeasure was expressed in broken sentences, partly muttered to himself, partly addressed to the domestics who stood around; and particularly to his cupbearer, who offered him from time to time, as a sedative, a silver goblet filled with wine — 'Why tarries the Lady Rowena?'

'She is but changing her head-gear,' replied a female attendant, with as much confidence as the favourite lady's-maid usually answers the master of a modern family; 'you would not wish her to sit down to the banquet in her hood and kirtle? and no lady within the shire can be quicker in arraying herself than my mistress.'

This undeniable argument produced a sort of acquiescent 'Umph!' on the part of the Saxon, with the addition, 'I wish her devotion may choose fair weather for the next visit to St. John's Kirk. But what, in the name of ten devils,' continued he, turning to the cupbearer, and raising his voice, as if happy to have found a charnel into which he might divert his indig-

nation without fear or control — 'what, in the name of ten devils, keeps Gurth so long a-field? I suppose we shall have an evil account of the herd; he was wont to be a faithful and cautious drudge, and I had destined him for something better; perchance I might even have made him one of my warders.'¹

Oswald, the cupbearer, modestly suggested, 'that it was scarce an hour since the tolling of the curfew' — an ill-chosen apology, since it turned upon a topic so harsh to Saxon ears.

'The foul fiend,' exclaimed Cedric, 'take the curfew-bell, and the tyrannical bastard by whom it was devised, and the heartless slave who names it with a Saxon tongue to a Saxon ear! The curfew!' he added, pausing — 'ay, the curfew, which compels true men to extinguish their lights, that thieves and robbers may work their deeds in darkness! Ay, the curfew! Reginald Front-de-Bœuf and Philip de Malvoisin know the use of the curfew as well as William the Bastard himself, or e'er a Norman adventurer that fought at Hastings. I shall hear, I guess, that my property has been swept off to save from starving the hungry banditti whom they cannot support but by theft and robbery. My faithful slave is murdered, and my goods are taken for a prey; and Wamba — where is Wamba? Said not some one he had gone forth with Gurth?'

Oswald replied in the affirmative.

'Ay! why, this is better and better! he is carried off too, the Saxon fool, to serve the Norman lord. Fools are we all indeed that serve them, and fitter subjects for their scorn and laughter than if we were born with but half our wits. But I will be avenged,' he added, starting from his chair in impatience at the supposed injury, and catching hold of his boar-spear; 'I will go with my complaint to the great council. I have friends, I have followers; man to man will I appeal the Norman to the lists. Let him come in his plate and his mail, and all that can render cowardice bold: I have sent such a javelin as this through a stronger fence than three of their war shields! Haply they think me old; but they shall find, alone and childless as I am, the blood of Hereward is in the veins of Cedric. Ah, Wilfred, Wilfred!' he exclaimed in a lower tone, 'couldst thou have ruled thine unreasonable passion, thy father had not been left in his age like the solitary oak that throws out its shattered and unprotected branches against the full sweep of the tempest!' The reflection seemed to conjure into sadness his irritated feelings. Replacing his javelin, he resumed his

¹ See Cnichts. Note 3.

seat, bent his looks downward, and seemed to be absorbed in melancholy reflection.

From his musing, Cedric was suddenly awakened by the blast of a horn, which was replied to by the clamorous yells and barking of all the dogs in the hall, and some twenty or thirty which were quartered in other parts of the building. It cost some exercise of the white truncheon, well seconded by the exertions of the domestics, to silence this canine clamour.

'To the gate, knaves!' said the Saxon, hastily, as soon as the tumult was so much appeased that the dependants could hear his voice. 'See what tidings that horn tells us of: to announce, I ween, some hership¹ and robbery which has been done upon my lands.'

Returning in less than three minutes, a warder announced, 'That the Prior Aymer of Jorvaulx, and the good knight Brian de Bois-Guilbert, commander of the valiant and venerable order of Knights Templars, with a small retinue, requested hospitality and lodging for the night, being on their way to a tournament which was to be held not far from Ashby-de-la-Zouche on the second day from the present.'

'Aymer — the Prior Aymer! Brian de Bois-Guilbert!' muttered Cedric — 'Normans both; but Norman or Saxon, the hospitality of Rotherwood must not be impeached: they are welcome, since they have chosen to halt; more welcome would they have been to have ridden farther on their way. But it were unworthy to murmur for a night's lodging and a night's food; in the quality of guests, at least, even Normans must suppress their insolence. Go, Hundebert,' he added, to a sort of major-domo who stood behind him with a white wand; 'take six of the attendants and introduce the strangers to the guests' lodging. Look after their horses and mules, and see their train lack nothing. Let them have change of vestments if they require it, and fire, and water to wash, and wine and ale; and bid the cooks add what they hastily can to our evening meal; and let it be put on the board when those stranger are ready to share it. Say to them, Hundebert, that Cedric would himself bid them welcome, but he is under a vow never to step more than three steps from the dais of his own hall to meet any who shares not the blood of Saxon royalty. Begone! see them carefully tended; let them not say in their pride, the Saxon churl has shown at once his poverty and his avarice.'

The major-domo departed with several attendants to execute his master's commands. 'The Prior Aymer!' repeated Cedric,

¹ Pillage.

looking to Oswald, 'the brother, if I mistake not, of Giles de Mauleverer, now lord of Middleham!'

Oswald made a respectful sign of assent. 'His brother sits in the seat, and usurps the patrimony, of a better race — the race of Ulfgar of Middleham; but what Norman lord doth not the same? This Prior is, they say, a free and jovial priest, who loves the wine-cup and the bugle-horn better than bell and book. Good; let him come, he shall be welcome. How named ye the Templar?'

'Brian de Bois-Guilbert.'

'Bois-Guilbert!' said Cedric, still in the musing, half-arguing tone which the habit of living among dependants had accustomed him to employ, and which resembled a man who talks to himself rather than to those around him — 'Bois-Guilbert! That name has been spread wide both for good and evil. They say he is valiant as the bravest of his order; but stained with their usual vices — pride, arrogance, cruelty, and voluptuousness — a hard-hearted man, who knows neither fear of earth nor awe of heaven. So say the few warriors who have returned from Palestine. Well, it is but for one night; he shall be welcome too. Oswald, broach the oldest wine-cask; place the best mead, the mightiest ale, the richest morat, the most sparkling cider, the most odoriferous pigments¹ upon the board; fill the largest horns: Templars and abbots love good wines and good measure. Elgitha, let thy Lady Rowena know we shall not this night expect her in the hall, unless such be her especial pleasure.'

'But it will be her especial pleasure,' answered Elgitha, with great readiness, 'for she is ever desirous to hear the latest news from Palestine.'

Cedric darted at the forward damsel a glance of hasty resentment; but Rowena and whatever belonged to her were privileged, and secure from his anger. He only replied, 'Silence, maiden; thy tongue outruns thy discretion. Say my message to thy mistress, and let her do her pleasure. Here, at least, the descendant of Alfred still reigns a princess.' Elgitha left the apartment.

'Palestine!' repeated the Saxon — 'Palestine! how many ears are turned to the tales which dissolute crusaders or hypocritical pilgrims bring from that fatal land! I too might ask — I too might inquire — I too might listen with a beating heart to fables which the wily strollers devise to cheat us into hos-

¹ See Morat and Pigment. Note 4.

pitality ; but no — the son who has disobeyed me is no longer mine ; nor will I concern myself more for his fate than for that of the most worthless among the millions that ever shaped the cross on their shoulder, rushed into excess and blood-guiltiness, and called it an accomplishment of the will of God.'

He knit his brows, and fixed his eyes for an instant on the ground ; as he raised them, the folding doors at the bottom of the hall were cast wide, and preceded by the major-domo with his wand, and four domestics bearing blazing torches, the guests of the evening entered the apartment.

CHAPTER IV

With sheep and shaggy goats the porkers bled,
And the proud steer was on the marble spread ;
With fire prepared, they deal the morsels round,
Wine rosy bright the brimming goblets crown'd.

Disposed apart, Ulysses shares the treat ;
A trivet table and ignobler seat,
The Prince assigns —

Odyssey, Book XXI.

THE Prior Aymer had taken the opportunity afforded him of changing his riding robe for one of yet more costly materials, over which he wore a cope curiously embroidered. Besides the massive golden signet ring which marked his ecclesiastical dignity, his fingers, though contrary to the canon, were loaded with precious gems ; his sandals were of the finest leather which was imported from Spain ; his beard trimmed to as small dimensions as his order would possibly permit, and his shaven crown concealed by a scarlet cap richly embroidered.

The appearance of the Knight Templar was also changed ; and, though less studiously bedecked with ornament, his dress was as rich, and his appearance far more commanding, than that of his companion. He had exchanged his shirt of mail for an under tunic of dark purple silk, garnished with furs, over which flowed his long robe of spotless white in ample folds. The eight-pointed cross of his order was cut on the shoulder of his mantle in black velvet. The high cap no longer invested his brows, which were only shaded by short and thick curled hair of a raven blackness, corresponding to his unusually swart complexion. Nothing could be more gracefully majestic than his step and manner, had they not been marked by a predominant air of haughtiness, easily acquired by the exercise of unresisted authority.

These two dignified persons were followed by their respective attendants, and at a more humble distance by their guide,

whose figure had nothing more remarkable than it derived from the usual weeds of a pilgrim. A cloak or mantle of coarse black serge enveloped his whole body. It was in shape something like the cloak of a modern hussar, having similar flaps for covering the arms, and was called a 'slaveyn,' or 'selavonian.' Coarse sandals, bound with thongs, on his bare feet; a broad and shadowy hat, with cockle-shells stitched on its brim, and a long staff shod with iron, to the upper end of which was attached a branch of palm, completed the Palmer's attire. He followed modestly the last of the train which entered the hall, and, observing that the lower table scarce afforded room sufficient for the domestics of Cedric and the retinue of his guests, he withdrew to a settle placed beside, and almost under, one of the large chimneys, and seemed to employ himself in drying his garments, until the retreat of some one should make room at the board, or the hospitality of the steward should supply him with refreshments in the place he had chosen apart.

Cedric rose to receive his guests with an air of dignified hospitality, and, descending from the dais, or elevated part of his hall, made three steps towards them, and then awaited their approach.

'I grieve,' he said, 'reverend Prior, that my vow binds me to advance no farther upon this floor of my fathers, even to receive such guests as you and this valiant Knight of the Holy Temple. But my steward has expounded to you the cause of my seeming discourtesy. Let me also pray that you will excuse my speaking to you in my native language, and that you will reply in the same if your knowledge of it permits; if not, I sufficiently understand Norman to follow your meaning.'

'Vows,' said the Abbot, 'must be unloosed, worthy franklin, or permit me rather to say, worthythane, though the title is antiquated. Vows are the knots which tie us to Heaven—they are the cords which bind the sacrifice to the horns of the altar—and are therefore, as I said before, to be unloosened and discharged, unless our Holy Mother Church shall pronounce the contrary. And respecting language, I willingly hold communication in that spoken by my respected grandmother, Hilda of Middleham, who died in odour of sanctity, little short, if we may presume to say so, of her glorious namesake, the blessed Saint Hilda of Whitby—God be gracious to her soul!'

When the Prior had ceased what he meant as a conciliatory

harangue, his companion said briefly and emphatically, 'I speak ever French, the language of King Richard and his nobles; but I understand English sufficiently to communicate with the natives of the country.'

Cedric darted at the speaker one of those hasty and impatient glances which comparisons between the two rival nations seldom failed to call forth; but, recollecting the duties of hospitality, he suppressed further show of resentment, and, motioning with his hand, caused his guests to assume two seats a little lower than his own, but placed close beside him, and gave a signal that the evening meal should be placed upon the board.

While the attendants hastened to obey Cedric's commands, his eye distinguished Gurth, the swineherd, who, with his companion Wamba, had just entered the hall. 'Send these loitering knaves up hither,' said the Saxon, impatiently. And when the culprits came before the dais — 'How comes it, villains, that ye have loitered abroad so late as this? Hast thou brought home thy charge, sirrah Gurth, or hast thou left them to robbers and marauders?'

'The herd is safe, so please ye,' said Gurth.

'But it does not please me, thou knave,' said Cedric, 'that I should be made to suppose otherwise for two hours, and sit here devising vengeance against my neighbours for wrongs they have not done me. I tell thee, shackles and the prison-house shall punish the next offence of this kind.'

Gurth, knowing his master's irritable temper, attempted no exculpation; but the Jester, who could presume upon Cedric's tolerance, by virtue of his privileges as a fool, replied for them both — 'In troth, uncle Cedric, you are neither wise nor reasonable to-night.'

'How, sir!' said his master; 'you shall to the porter's lodge and taste of the discipline there if you give your foolery such license.'

'First let your wisdom tell me,' said Wamba, 'is it just and reasonable to punish one person for the fault of another?'

'Certainly not, fool,' answered Cedric.

'Then why should you shackle poor Gurth, uncle, for the fault of his dog Fangs? for I dare be sworn we lost not a minute by the way, when we had got our herd together, which Fangs did not manage until we heard the vesper-bell.'

'Then hang up Fangs,' said Cedric, turning hastily towards the swineherd, 'if the fault is his, and get thee another dog.'

'Under favour, uncle,' said the Jester, 'that were still somewhat on the bow-hand of fair justice; for it was no fault of Fangs that he was lame and could not gather the herd, but the fault of those that struck off two of his fore-claws, an operation for which, if the poor fellow had been consulted, he would scarce have given his voice.'

'And who dared to lame an animal which belonged to my bondsman?' said the Saxon, kindling in wrath.

'Marry, that did old Hubert,' said Wamba, 'Sir Philip de Malvoisin's keeper of the chase. He caught Fangs strolling in the forest, and said he chased the deer contrary to his master's right, as warden of the walk.'

'The foul fiend take Malvoisin,' answered the Saxon, 'and his keeper both! I will teach them that the wood was disforested in terms of the great Forest Charter. But enough of this. Go to, knave, — go to thy place; and thou, Gurth, get thee another dog, and should the keeper dare to touch it, I will mar his archery; the curse of a coward on my head, if I strike not off the forefinger of his right hand! he shall draw bowstring no more. I crave your pardon, my worthy guests. I am beset here with neighbours that match your infidels, Sir Knight, in Holy Land. But your homely fare is before you; feed, and let welcome make amends for hard fare.'

The feast, however, which was spread upon the board needed no apologies from the lord of the mansion. Swine's flesh, dressed in several modes, appeared on the lower part of the board, as also that of fowls, deer, goats, and hares, and various kinds of fish, together with huge loaves and cakes of bread, and sundry confections made of fruits and honey. The smaller sorts of wild-fowl, of which there was abundance, were not served up in platters, but brought in upon small wooden spits or broaches, and offered by the pages and domestics who bore them to each guest in succession, who cut from them such a portion as he pleased. Beside each person of rank was placed a goblet of silver; the lower board was accommodated with large drinking-horns.

When the repast was about to commence, the major-domo, or steward, suddenly raising his wand, said aloud — 'Forbear! Place for the Lady Rowena.' A side-door at the upper end of the hall now opened behind the banquet table, and Rowena, followed by four female attendants, entered the apartinent. Cedric, though surprised, and perhaps not altogether agreeably so, at his ward appearing in public on this occasion, hastened

to meet her, and to conduct her, with respectful ceremony, to the elevated seat at his own right hand appropriated to the lady of the mansion. All stood up to receive her; and, replying to their courtesy by a mute gesture of salutation, she moved gracefully forward to assume her place at the board. Ere she had time to do so, the Templar whispered to the Prior, 'I shall wear no collar of gold of yours at the tournament. The Chian wine is your own.'

'Said I not so?' answered the Prior; 'but check your raptures, the franklin observes you.'

Unheeding this remonstrance, and accustomed only to act upon the immediate impulse of his own wishes, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, kept his eyes riveted on the Saxon beauty, more striking perhaps to his imagination because differing widely from those of the Eastern sultanas.

Formed in the best proportions of her sex, Rowena was tall in stature, yet not so much so as to attract observation on account of superior height. Her complexion was exquisitely fair, but the noble cast of her head and features prevented the insipidity which sometimes attaches to fair beauties. Her clear blue eye, which sate enshrined beneath a graceful eyebrow of brown, sufficiently marked to give expression to the forehead, seemed capable to kindle as well as melt, to command as well as to beseech. If mildness were the more natural expression of such a combination of features, it was plain that, in the present instance, the exercise of habitual superiority, and the reception of general homage, had given to the Saxon lady a loftier character, which mingled with and qualified that bestowed by nature. Her profuse hair, of a colour betwixt brown and flaxen, was arranged in a fanciful and graceful manner in numerous ringlets, to form which art had probably aided nature. These locks were braided with gems, and being worn at full length, intimated the noble and free-born condition of the maiden. A golden chain, to which was attached a small reliquary of the same metal, hung round her neck. She wore bracelets on her arms, which were bare. Her dress was an under-gown and kirtle of pale sea-green silk, over which hung a long loose robe, which reached to the ground, having very wide sleeves, which came down, however, very little below the elbow. This robe was crimson, and manufactured out of the very finest wool. A veil of silk, interwoven with gold, was attached to the upper part of it, which could be, at the wearer's pleasure, either drawn

over the face and bosom after the Spanish fashion, or disposed as a sort of dappery round the shoulders.

When Rowena perceived the Knight Templar's eyes bent on her with an ardour that, compared with the dark caverns under which they moved, gave them the effect of lighted charcoal, she drew with dignity the veil around her face, as an intimation that the determined freedom of his glance was disagreeable.

Cedric saw the motion and its cause. 'Sir Templar,' said he, 'the cheeks of our Saxon maidens have seen too little of the sun to enable them to bear the fixed glance of a crusader.'

'If I have offended,' replied Sir Brian, 'I crave your pardon—that is, I crave the Lady Rowena's pardon, for my humility will carry me no lower.'

'The Lady Rowena,' said the Prior, 'has punished us all, in chastising the boldness of my friend. Let me hope she will be less cruel to the splendid train which are to meet at the tournament.'

'Our going thither,' said Cedric, 'is uncertain. I love not these vanities, which were unknown to my fathers when England was free.'

'Let us hope, nevertheless,' said the Prior, 'our company may determine you to travel thitherward; when the roads are so unsafe, the escort of Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert is not to be despised.'

'Sir Prior,' answered the Saxon, 'wheresoever I have travelled in this land, I have hitherto found myself, with the assistance of my good sword and faithful followers, in no respect needful of other aid. At present, if we need journey to Ashby-de-la-Zouche, we do so with my noble neighbour and countryman, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, and with such a train as would set outlaws and feudal enemies at defiance. I drink to you, Sir Prior, in this cup of wine, which I trust your taste will approve, and I thank you for your courtesy. Should you be so rigid in adhering to monastic rule,' he added, 'as to prefer your acid preparation of milk, I hope you will not strain courtesy to do me reason.'

'Nay,' said the Priest, laughing, 'it is only in our abbey that we confine ourselves to the *lac dulce* or the *lac acidum* either. Conversing with the world, we use the world's fashions, and therefore I answer your pledge in this honest wine, and leave the weaker liquor to my lay-brother.'

'And I,' said the Templar, filling his goblet, 'drink wassail

to the fair Rowena; for since her namesake introduced the word into England, has never been one more worthy of such a tribute. By my faith, I could pardon the unhappy Vortigern, had he half the cause that we now witness for making shipwreck of his honour and his kingdom.'

'I will spare your courtesy, Sir Knight,' said Rowena with dignity, and without unveiling herself; 'or rather I will tax it so far as to require of you the latest news from Palestine, a theme more agreeable to our English ears than the compliments which your French breeding teaches.'

'I have little of importance to say, lady,' answered Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, 'excepting the confirmed tidings of a truce with Saladin.'

He was interrupted by Wamba, who had taken his appropriated seat upon a chair the back of which was decorated with two ass's ears, and which was placed about two steps behind that of his master, who, from time to time, supplied him with victuals from his own trencher; a favour, however, which the Jester shared with the favourite dogs, of whom, as we have already noticed, there were several in attendance. Here sat Wamba, with a small table before him, his heels tucked up against the bar of the chair, his cheeks sucked up so as to make his jaws resemble a pair of nut-crackers, and his eyes half-shut, yet watching with alertness every opportunity to exercise his licensed foolery.

'These truces with the infidels,' he exclaimed, without caring how suddenly he interrupted the stately Templar, 'make an old man of me!'

'Go to, knave — how so?' said Cedric, his features prepared to receive favourably the expected jest.

'Because,' answered Wamba, 'I remember three of them in my day, each of which was to endure for the course of fifty years; so that, by computation, I must be at least a hundred and fifty years old.'

'I will warrant you against dying of old age, however,' said the Templar, who now recognised his friend of the forest; 'I will assure you from all deaths but a violent one, if you give such directions to wayfarers as you did this night to the Prior and me.'

'How, sirrah!' said Cedric, 'misdirect traveller? We must have you whipt; you are at least as much rogue as fool.'

'I pray thee, uncle,' answered the Jester, 'let my folly for once protect my roguery. I did but make a mistake between

my right hand and my left ; and he might have pardoned a greater who took a fool for his counsellor and guide.'

Conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of the porter's page, who announced that there was a stranger at the gate, imploring admittance and hospitality.

'Admit him,' said Cedric, 'be he who or what he may : a night like that which roars without compels even wild animals to herd with tame, and to seek the protection of man, their mortal foe, rather than perish by the elements. Let his wants be ministered to with all care ; look to it, Oswald.'

And the steward left the banqueting-hall to see the commands of his patron obeyed.

CHAPTER V

Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?
Merchant of Venice.

OSWALD, returning, whispered into the ear of his master, 'It is a Jew, who calls himself Isaac of York; is it fit I should marshal him into the hall?'

'Let Gurth do thine office, Oswald,' said Wamba with his usual effrontery: 'the swineherd will be a fit usher to the Jew.'

'Saint Mary,' said the Abbot, crossing himself, 'an unbelieving Jew, and admitted into this presence!'

'A dog Jew,' echoed the Templar, 'to approach a defender of the Holy Sepulchre?'

'By my faith,' said Wamba, 'it would seem the Templars love the Jews' inheritance better than they do their company.'

'Peace, my worthy guests,' said Cedric; 'my hospitality must not be bounded by your dislikes. If Heaven bore with the whole nation of stiff-necked unbelievers for more years than a layman can number, we may endure the presence of one Jew for a few hours. But I constrain no man to converse or to feed with him. Let him have a board and a morsel apart, — unless,' he said smiling, 'these turban'd strangers will admit his society.'

'Sir Franklin,' answered the Templar, 'my Saracen slaves are true Moslems, and scorn as much as any Christian to hold intercourse with a Jew.'

'Now, in faith,' said Wamba, 'I cannot see that the worshippers of Mahound and Termagaunt have so greatly the advantage over the people once chosen of Heaven.'

'He shall sit with thee, Wamba,' said Cedric; 'the fool and the knave will be well met.'

'The fool,' answered Wamba, raising the relics of a gammon

of bacon, 'will take care to erect a bulwark against the knave.'

'Hush,' said Cedric, 'for here he comes.'

Introduced with little ceremony, and advancing with fear and hesitation, and many a bow of deep humility, a tall thin old man, who, however, had lost by the habit of stooping much of his actual height, approached the lower end of the board. His features, keen and regular, with an aquiline nose, and piercing black eyes; his high and wrinkled forehead, and long grey hair and beard, would have been considered as handsome, had they not been the marks of a physiognomy peculiar to a race which, during those dark ages, was alike detested by the credulous and prejudiced vulgar, and persecuted by the greedy and rapacious nobility, and who, perhaps owing to that very hatred and persecution, had adopted a national character in which there was much, to say the least, mean and unamiable.

The Jew's dress, which appeared to have suffered considerably from the storm, was a plain russet cloak of many folds, covering a dark purple tunic. He had large boots lined with fur, and a belt around his waist, which sustained a small knife, together with a case for writing materials, but no weapon. He wore a high square yellow cap of a peculiar fashion, assigned to his nation to distinguish them from Christians, and which he doffed with great humility at the door of the hall.

The reception of this person in the hall of Cedric the Saxon was such as might have satisfied the most prejudiced enemy of the tribes of Israel. Cedric himself coldly nodded in answer to the Jew's repeated salutations, and signed to him to take place at the lower end of the table, where, however, no one offered to make room for him. On the contrary, as he passed along the file, casting a timid, supplicating glance, and turning towards each of those who occupied the lower end of the board, the Saxon domestics squared their shoulders, and continued to devour their supper with great perseverance, paying not the least attention to the wants of the new guest. The attendants of the Abbot crossed themselves, with looks of pious horror, and the very heathen Saracens, as Isaac drew near them, curled up their whiskers with indignation, and laid their hands on their poniards, as if ready to rid themselves by the most desperate means from the apprehended contamination of his nearer approach.

Probably the same motives which induced Cedric to open his hall to this son of a rejected people would have made him

insist on his attendants receiving Isaac with more courtesy ; but the Abbot had at this moment engaged him in a most interesting discussion on the breed and character of his favourite hounds, which he would not have interrupted for matters of much greater importance than that of a Jew going to bed supperless. While Isaac thus stood an outcast in the present society, like his people among the nations, looking in vain for welcome or resting-place, the Pilgrim, who sat by the chimney, took compassion upon him, and resigned his seat, saying briefly, 'Old man, my garments are dried, my hunger is appeased ; thou art both wet and fasting.' So saying, he gathered together and brought to a flame the decaying brands which lay scattered on the ample hearth ; took from the larger board a mess of pottage and seethed kid, placed it upon the small table at which he had himself supped, and, without waiting the Jew's thanks, went to the other side of the hall, whether from unwillingness to hold more close communication with the object of his benevolence, or from a wish to draw near to the upper end of the table, seemed uncertain.

Had there been painters in those days capable to execute such a subject, the Jew, as he bent his withered form and expanded his chilled and trembling hands over the fire, would have formed no bad emblematical personification of the Winter season. Having dispelled the cold, he turned eagerly to the smoking mess which was placed before him, and ate with a haste and an apparent relish that seemed to betoken long abstinence from food.

Meanwhile the Abbot and Cedric continued their discourse upon hunting ; the lady Rowena seemed engaged in conversation with one of her attendant females ; and the haughty Templar, whose eye wandered from the Jew to the Saxon beauty, revolved in his mind thoughts which appeared deeply to interest him.

'I marvel, worthy Cedric,' said the Abbot, as their discourse proceeded, 'that, great as your predilection is for your own manly language, you do not receive the Norman-French into your favour, so far at least as the mystery of woodcraft and hunting is concerned. Surely no tongue is so rich in the various phrases which the field-sports demand, or furnishes means to the experienced woodman so well to express his jovial art.'

'Good Father Aymer,' said the Saxon, 'be it known to you, I care not for those over-sea refinements, without which I can well enough take my pleasure in the woods. I can wind my

horn, though I call not the blast either a *recheate* or a *morte*; I can cheer my dogs on the prey, and I can flay and quarter the animal when it is brought down, without using the new-fangled jargon of *carée*, *arbor*, *nombres*, and all the babble of the fabulous Sir Tristrem.¹

'The French,' said the Templar, raising his voice with the presumptuous and authoritative tone which he used upon all occasions, 'is not only the natural language of the chase, but that of love and war, in which ladies should be won and enemies defied.'

'Pledge me in a cup of wine, Sir Templar,' said Cedric, 'and fill another to the Abbot, while I look back some thirty years to tell you another tale. As Cedric the Saxon then was, his plain English tale needed no garnish from French troubadours when it was told in the ear of beauty; and the field of Northallerton, upon the day of the Holy Standard, could tell whether the Saxon war-cry was not heard as far within the ranks of the Scottish host as the *cri de guerre* of the boldest Norman baron. To the memory of the brave who fought there! Pledge me, my guests.' He drank deep, and went on with increasing warmth — 'Ay, that was a day of cleaving of shields, when a hundred banners were bent forwards over the heads of the valiant, and blood flowed round like water, and death was held better than flight. A Saxon bard had called it a *fast* of the swords — a gathering of the eagles to the prey — the clashing of bills upon shield and helmet, the shouting of battle more joyful than the clamour of a bridal. But our bards are no more,' he said; 'our deeds are lost in those of another race; our language — our very name — is hastening to decay, and none mourns for it save one solitary old man. Cupbearer! knave, fill the goblets. To the strong in arms, Sir Templar, be their race or language what it will, who now bear them best in Palestine among the champions of the Cross!'

'It becomes not one wearing this badge to answer,' said Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert; 'yet to whom, besides the sworn champions of the Holy Sepulchre, can the palm be assigned among the champions of the Cross?'

'To the Knights Hospitallers,' said the Abbot; 'I have a brother of their order.'

'I impeach not their fame,' said the Templar; 'nevertheless —'

'I think, friend Cedric,' said Wamba, interfering, 'that had

¹ See Note 5.

Richard of the Lion's Heart been wise enough to have taken a fool's advice, he might have staid at home with his merry Englishmen, and left the recovery of Jerusalem to those same Knights who had most to do with the loss of it.'

'Were there, then, none in the English army,' said the Lady Rowena, 'whose names are worthy to be mentioned with the Knights of the Temple and of St. John?'

'Forgive me, lady,' replied De Bois-Guilbert; 'the English monarch did indeed bring to Palestine a host of gallant warriors, second only to those whose breasts have been the unceasing bulwark of that blessed land.'

'Second to NONE,' said the Pilgrim, who had stood near enough to hear, and had listened to this conversation with marked impatience. All turned towards the spot from whence this unexpected asseveration was heard. 'I say,' repeated the Pilgrim in a firm and strong voice, 'that the English chivalry were second to NONE who ever drew sword in defence of the Holy Land. I say besides, for I saw it, that King Richard himself, and five of his knights, held a tournament after the taking of St. John-de-Acre, as challengers against all comers. I say that, on that day, each knight ran three courses, and cast to the ground three antagonists. I add, that seven of these assailants were Knights of the Temple; and Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert well knows the truth of what I tell you.'

It is impossible for language to describe the bitter scowl of rage which rendered yet darker the swarthy countenance of the Templar. In the extremity of his resentment and confusion, his quivering fingers griped towards the handle of his sword, and perhaps only withdrew from the consciousness that no act of violence could be safely executed in that place and presence. Cedric, whose feelings were all of a right onward and simple kind, and were seldom occupied by more than one object at once, omitted, in the joyous glee with which he heard of the glory of his countrymen, to remark the angry confusion of his guest. 'I would give thee this golden bracelet, Pilgrim,' he said, 'couldst thou tell me the names of those knights who upheld so gallantly the renown of merry England.'

'That will I do blithely,' replied the Pilgrim, 'and without guerdon; my oath, for a time, prohibits me from touching gold.'

'I will wear the bracelet for you, if you will, friend Palmer,' said Wamba.

'The first in honour as in arms, in renown as in place,' said the Pilgrim, 'was the brave Richard, King of England.'

'I forgive him,' said Cedric — 'I forgive him his descent from the tyrant Duke William.'

'The Earl of Leicester was the second,' continued the Pilgrim. 'Sir Thomas Multon of Gilsland was the third.'

'Of Saxon descent, he at least,' said Cedric, with exultation.

'Sir Foulk Doilly the fourth,' proceeded the Pilgrim.

'Saxon also, at least by the mother's side,' continued Cedric, who listened with the utmost eagerness, and forgot, in part at least, his hatred to the Normans in the common triumph of the King of England and his islanders. 'And who was the fifth?' he demanded.

'The fifth was Sir Edwin Turneham.'

'Genuine Saxon, by the soul of Hengist!' shouted Cedric. 'And the sixth?' he continued with eagerness — 'how name you the sixth?'

'The sixth,' said the Palmer, after a pause, in which he seemed to recollect himself, 'was a young knight of lesser renown and lower rank, assumed into that honourable company less to aid their enterprise than to make up their number; his name dwells not in my memory.'

'Sir Palmer,' said Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, scornfully, 'this assumed forgetfulness, after so much has been remembered, comes too late to serve your purpose. I will myself tell the name of the knight before whose lance fortune and my horse's fault occasioned my falling: it was the Knight of Ivanhoe; nor was there one of the six that, for his years, had more renown in arms. Yet this will I say, and loudly — that were he in England, and durst repeat, in this week's tournament, the challenge of St. John-de-Acre, I, mounted and armed as I now am, would give him every advantage of weapons, and abide the result.'

'Your challenge would be soon answered,' replied the Palmer, 'were your antagonist near you. As the matter is, disturb not the peaceful hall with vaunts of the issue of a conflict which you well know cannot take place. If Ivanhoe ever returns from Palestine, I will be his surety that he meets you.'

'A goodly security!' said the Knight Templar; 'and what do you proffer as a pledge?'

'This reliquary,' said the Palmer, taking a small ivory box from his bosom, and crossing himself, 'containing a portion of the true cross, brought from the monastery of Mount Carmel.'

The Prior of Jorvaulx crossed himself and repeated a pater-noster, in which all devoutly joined, excepting the Jew, the

Mahomedans, and the Templar; the latter of whom, without vailing his bonnet or testifying any reverence for the alleged sanctity of the relic, took from his neck a gold chain, which he flung on the board, saying, 'Let Prior Aymer hold my pledge and that of this nameless vagrant, in token that, when the Knight of Ivanhoe comes within the four seas of Britain, he underlies the challenge of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, which, if he answer not, I will proclaim him as a coward on the walls of every Temple court in Europe.'

'It will not need,' said the Lady Rowena, breaking silence: 'my voice shall be heard, if no other in this hall is raised, in behalf of the absent Ivanhoe. I affirm he will meet fairly every honourable challenge. Could my weak warrant add security to the inestimable pledge of this holy pilgrim, I would pledge name and fame that Ivanhoe gives this proud knight the meeting he desires.'

A crowd of conflicting emotions seemed to have occupied Cedric and kept him silent during this discussion. Gratified pride, resentment, embarrassment, chased each other over his broad and open brow, like the shadow of clouds drifting over a harvest-field; while his attendants, on whom the name of the sixth knight seemed to produce an effect almost electrical, hung in suspense upon their master's looks. But when Rowena spoke, the sound of her voice seemed to startle him from his silence.

'Lady,' said Cedric, 'this beseems not; were further pledge necessary, I myself, offended, and justly offended, as I am, would yet gage my honour for the honour of Ivanhoe. But the wager of battle is complete, even according to the fantastic fashions of Norman chivalry. Is it not, Father Aymer?'

'It is,' replied the Prior; 'and the blessed relic and rich chain will I bestow safely in the treasury of our convent, until the decision of this warlike challenge.'

Having thus spoken, he crossed himself again and again, and after many genuflections and muttered prayers, he delivered the reliquary to Father Ambrose, his attendant monk, while he himself swept up with less ceremony, but perhaps with no less internal satisfaction, the golden chain, and bestowed it in a pouch lined with perfumed leather, which opened under his arm. 'And now, Sir Cedric,' he said, 'my ears are chiming vespers with the strength of your good wine: permit us another pledge to the welfare of the Lady Rowena, and indulge us with liberty to pass to our repose.'

'By the rood of Bromholme,' said the Saxon, 'you do but small credit to your fame, Sir Prior! Report speaks you a bonny monk, that would hear the matin chime ere he quitted his bowl; and, old as I am, I feared to have shame in encountering you. But, by my faith, a Saxon boy of twelve, in my time, would not so soon have relinquished his goblet.'

The Prior had his own reasons, however, for persevering in the course of temperance which he had adopted. He was not only a professional peacemaker, but from practice a hater of all feuds and brawls. It was not altogether from a love to his neighbour, or to himself, or from a mixture of both. On the present occasion, he had an instinctive apprehension of the fiery temper of the Saxon, and saw the danger that the reckless and presumptuous spirit of which his companion had already given so many proofs might at length produce some disagreeable explosion. He therefore gently insinuated the incapacity of the native of any other country to engage in the genial conflict of the bowl with the hardy and strong-headed Saxons; something he mentioned, but slightly, about his own holy character, and ended by pressing his proposal to depart to repose.

The grace-cup was accordingly served round, and the guests, after making deep obeisance to their landlord and to the Lady Rowena, arose and mingled in the hall, while the heads of the family, by separate doors, retired with their attendants.

'Unbelieving dog,' said the Templar to Isaac the Jew, as he passed him in the throng, 'dost thou bend thy course to the tournament?'

'I do so propose,' replied Isaac, bowing in all humility, 'if it please your reverend valour.'

'Ay,' said the Knight, 'to gnaw the bowels of our nobles with usury, and to gull women and boys with gauds and toys: I warrant thee store of shekels in thy Jewish scrip.'

'Not a shekel, not a silver penny, not a halfling, so help me the God of Abraham!' said the Jew, clasping his hands. 'I go but to seek the assistance of some brethren of my tribe to aid me to pay the fine which the Exchequer of the Jews¹ have imposed upon me, Father Jacob be my speed! I am an impoverished wretch: the very gaberdine I wear is borrowed from Reuben of Tadcaster.'

The Templar smiled sourly as he replied, 'Beshrew thee for a false-hearted liar!' and passing onward, as if disdaining

¹ In those days the Jews were subjected to an Exchequer, specially dedicated to that purpose, and which laid them under the most exorbitant impositions. — L. T.

farther conference, he communed with his Moslem slaves in a language unknown to the bystanders. The poor Israelite seemed so staggered by the address of the military monk, that the Templar had passed on to the extremity of the hall ere he raised his head from the humble posture which he had assumed, so far as to be sensible of his departure. And when he did look around, it was with the astonished air of one at whose feet a thunderbolt has just burst, and who hears still the astounding report ringing in his ears.

The Templar and Prior were shortly after marshalled to their sleeping apartments by the steward and the cupbearer, each attended by two torch-bearers and two servants carrying refreshments, while servants of inferior condition indicated to their retinue and to the other guests their respective places of repose.

CHAPTER VI

To buy his favour I extend this friendship:
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

Merchant of Venice.

AS the Palmer, lighted by a domestic with a torch, passed through the intricate combination of apartments of this large and irregular mansion, the cupbearer, coming behind him, whispered in his ear, that if he had no objection to a cup of good mead in his apartment, there were many domestics in that family who would gladly hear the news he had brought from the Holy Land, and particularly that which concerned the Knight of Ivanhoe. Wamba presently appeared to urge the same request, observing that a cup after midnight was worth three after curfew. Without disputing a maxim urged by such grave authority, the Palmer thanked them for their courtesy, but observed that he had included in his religious vow an obligation never to speak in the kitchen on matters which were prohibited in the hall.

'That vow,' said Wamba to the cupbearer, 'would scarce suit a serving-man.'

The cupbearer shrugged up his shoulders in displeasure. 'I thought to have lodged him in the solere chamber,' said he; 'but since he is so unsocial to Christians, e'en let him take the next stall to Isaac the Jew's. Anwold,' said he to the torchbearer, 'carry the Pilgrim to the southern cell. I give you good-night,' he added, 'Sir Palmer, with small thanks for short courtesy.'

'Good-night, and Our Lady's benison!' said the Palmer, with composure; and his guide moved forward.

In a small ante-chamber, into which several doors opened, and which was lighted by a small iron lamp, they met a second interruption from the waiting-maid of Rowena, who, saying in a tone of authority that her mistress desired to speak

with the Palmer, took the torch from the hand of Anwold, and, bidding him await her return, made a sign to the Palmer to follow. Apparently he did not think it proper to decline this invitation as he had done the former; for, though his gesture indicated some surprise at the summons, he obeyed it without answer or remonstrance.

A short passage, and an ascent of seven steps, each of which was composed of a solid beam of oak, led him to the apartment of the Lady Rowena, the rude magnificence of which corresponded to the respect which was paid to her by the lord of the mansion. The walls were covered with embroidered hangings, on which different-coloured silks, interwoven with gold and silver threads, had been employed, with all the art of which the age was capable, to represent the sports of hunting and hawking. The bed was adorned with the same rich tapestry, and surrounded with curtains dyed with purple. The seats had also their stained coverings, and one, which was higher than the rest, was accommodated with a footstool of ivory, curiously carved.

No fewer than four silver candelabras, holding great waxen torches, served to illuminate this apartment. Yet let not modern beauty envy the magnificence of a Saxon princess. The walls of the apartment were so ill finished and so full of crevices, that the rich hangings shook to the night blast, and, in despite of a sort of screen intended to protect them from the wind, the flame of the torches streamed sideways into the air, like the unfurled pennon of a chieftain. Magnificence there was, with some rude attempt at taste; but of comfort there was little, and, being unknown, it was unmissed.

The Lady Rowena, with three of her attendants standing at her back, and arranging her hair ere she lay down to rest, was seated in the sort of throne already mentioned, and looked as if born to exact general homage. The Pilgrim acknowledged her claim to it by a low genuflection.

'Rise, Palmer,' said she graciously. 'The defender of the absent has a right to favourable reception from all who value truth and honour manhood.' She then said to her train, 'Retire, excepting only Elgitha; I would speak with this holy Pilgrim.'

The maidens, without leaving the apartment, retired to its farthest extremity, and sat down on a small bench against the wall, where they remained mute as statues, though at such a distance that their whispers could not have interrupted the conversation of their mistress.

'Pilgrim,' said the lady, after a moment's pause, during which she seemed uncertain how to address him, 'you this night mentioned a name - I mean,' she said with a degree of effort, 'the name of Ivanhoe - in the halls where by nature and kindred it should have sounded most acceptably; and yet such is the perverse course of fate, that of many whose hearts must have throbbed at the sound, I only dare ask you where, and in what condition, you left him of whom you spoke? We heard that, having remained in Palestine, on account of his impaired health, after the departure of the English army, he had experienced the persecution of the French faction, to whom the Templars are known to be attached.'

'I know little of the Knight of Ivanhoe,' answered the Palmer, with a troubled voice. 'I would I knew him better, since you, lady, are interested in his fate. He hath, I believe, surmounted the persecution of his enemies in Palestine, and is on the eve of returning to England, where you, lady, must know better than I what is his chance of happiness.'

The Lady Rowena sighed deeply, and asked more particularly when the Knight of Ivanhoe might be expected in his native country, and whether he would not be exposed to great dangers by the road. On the first point, the Palmer professed ignorance; on the second, he said that the voyage might be safely made by the way of Venice and Genoa, and from thence through France to England. 'Ivanhoe,' he said, 'was so well acquainted with the language and manners of the French, that there was no fear of his incurring any hazard during that part of his travels.'

'Would to God,' said the Lady Rowena, 'he were here safely arrived, and able to bear arms in the approaching tourney, in which the chivalry of this land are expected to display their address and valour. Should Athelstane of Coningsburgh obtain the prize, Ivanhoe is like to hear evil tidings when he reaches England. How looked he, stranger, when you last saw him? Had disease laid her hand heavy upon his strength and comeliness?'

'He was darker,' said the Palmer, 'and thinner than when he came from Cyprus in the train of Cœur-de-Lion, and care seemed to sit heavy on his brow; but I approached not his presence, because he is unknown to me.'

'He will,' said the lady, 'I fear, find little in his native land to clear those clouds from his countenance. Thanks, good Pilgrim, for your information concerning the companion of my

childhood. Maidens,' she said, 'draw near: offer the sleeping-cup to this holy man, whom I will no longer detain from repose.'

One of the maidens presented a silver cup containing a rich mixture of wine and spice, which Rowena barely put to her lips. It was then offered to the Palmer, who, after a low obeisance, tasted a few drops.

'Accept this alma, friend,' continued the lady, offering a piece of gold, 'in acknowledgment of thy painful travail, and of the shrines thou hast visited.'

The Palmer received the boon with another low reverence, and followed Edwina out of the apartment.

In the ante-room he found his attendant Anwold, who, taking the torch from the hand of the waiting-maid, conducted him with more haste than ceremony to an exterior and ignoble part of the building, where a number of small apartments, or rather cells, served for sleeping-places to the lower order of domestics, and to strangers of mean degree.

'In which of these sleeps the Jew?' said the Pilgrim.

'The unbelieving dog,' answered Anwold, 'kennels in the cell next your holiness. St. Dunstan, how it must be scraped and cleansed ere it be again fit for a Christian!'

'And where sleeps Gurth, the swineherd?' said the stranger.

'Gurth,' replied the bondsman, 'sleeps in the cell on your right, as the Jew on that to your left; you serve to keep the child of circumcision separate from the abomination of his tribe. You might have occupied a more honourable place had you accepted of Oswald's invitation.'

'It is as well as it is,' said the Palmer; 'the company, even of a Jew, can hardly spread contamination through an oaken partition.'

So saying, he entered the cabin allotted to him, and taking the torch from the domestic's hand, thanked him and wished him good-night. Having shut the door of his cell, he placed the torch in a candlestick made of wood, and looked around his sleeping apartment, the furniture of which was of the most simple kind. It consisted of a rude wooden stool, and still ruder hutch or bed-frame, stuffed with clean straw, and accommodated with two or three sheepskins by way of bed-clothes.

The Palmer, having extinguished his torch, threw himself, without taking off any part of his clothes, on this rude couch, and slept, or at least retained his recumbent posture, till the earliest sunbeams found their way through the little grated

window, which served at once to admit both air and light to his uncomfortable cell. He then started up, and after repenting his undress and adjusting his dress he left it, and entered that of Isaac the Jew, lifting the latch as gently as he could.

The inmate was lying in troubled slumber upon a couch similar to that on which the Palmer himself had passed the night. Such parts of his dress as the Jew had laid aside on the preceding evening were disposed carefully around his person, as if to prevent the hazard of their being carried off during his slumbers. There was a trouble on his brow amounting almost to agony. His hands and arms moved convulsively, as if struggling with the nightmare; and besides several ejaculations in Hebrew, the following were distinctly heard in the Norman-English, or mixed language of the country: 'For the sake of the God of Abraham, spare an unhappy old man! I am poor, I am penniless; should your iron wrench my limbs asunder, I could not gratify you!'

The Palmer awaited not the end of the Jew's vision, but stirred him with his pilgrim's staff. The touch probably associated, as is usual, with some of the apprehensions excited by his dream; for the old man started up, his grey hair standing almost erect upon his head, and huddling some part of his garments about him, while he held the detached pieces with the tenacious grasp of a falcon, he fixed upon the Palmer his keen black eyes, expressive of wild surprise and of bodily apprehension.

'Fear nothing from me, Isaac,' said the Palmer, 'I come as your friend.'

'The God of Israel requite you,' said the Jew, greatly relieved; 'I dreamed — but Father Abraham be praised, it was but a dream!' Then, collecting himself, he added in his usual tone, 'And what may it be your pleasure to want at so early an hour with the poor Jew?'

'It is to tell you,' said the Palmer, 'that if you leave not your mansion instantly, and travel not with some haste, your journey may prove a dangerous one.'

'Holy father!' said the Jew, 'whom could it interest to endanger so poor a wretch as I am?'

'The purpose you can best guess,' said the Pilgrim; 'but rely on this, that when the Templar crossed the hall yesterday, he spoke to his Mussulman slaves in the Saracen language, which I well understand, and charged them this morning to watch the journey of the Jew, to seize upon him when at a

convenient distance from the mansion, and to conduct him to the castle of Philip de Malvoisin or to that of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf.'

It is impossible to describe the extremity of terror which seized upon the Jew at this information, and seemed at once to overpower his whole faculties. His arms fell down to his sides, and his head drooped on his breast, his knees bent under his weight, every nerve and muscle of his frame seemed to collapse and lose its energy, and he sunk at the foot of the Palmer, not in the fashion of one who intentionally stoops, kneels, or prostrates himself to excite compassion, but like a man borne down on all sides by the pressure of some invisible force, which crushes him to the earth without the power of resistance.

'Holy God of Abraham!' was his first exclamation, folding and elevating his wrinkled hands, but without raising his grey head from the pavement; 'O holy Moses! O blessed Aaron! the dream is not dreamed for nought, and the vision cometh not in vain! I feel their irons already tear my sinews! I feel the rack pass over my body like the saws, and harrows, and axes of iron over the men of Rabbah, and of the cities of the children of Ammon!'

'Stand up, Isaac, and hearken to me,' said the Palmer, who viewed the extremity of his distress with a compassion in which contempt was largely mingled; 'you have cause for your terror, considering how your brethren have been used, in order to extort from them their hoards, both by princes and nobles; but stand up, I say, and I will point out to you the means of escape. Leave this mansion instantly, while its inmates sleep sound after the last night's revel. I will guide you by the secret paths of the forest, known as well to me as to any forester that ranges it, and I will not leave you till you are under safe conduct of some chief or baron going to the tournament, whose good-will you have probably the means of securing.'

As the ears of Isaac received the hopes of escape which this speech intimated, he began gradually, and inch by inch, as it were, to raise himself up from the ground, until he fairly rested upon his knees, throwing back his long grey hair and beard, and fixing his keen black eyes upon the Palmer's face, with a look expressive at once of hope and fear, not unmingled with suspicion. But when he heard the concluding part of the sentence, his original terror appeared to revive in full force, and he dropt once more on his face, exclaiming, 'I possess the

means of securing good-will ! Alas ! there is but one road to the favour of a Christian, and how can the poor Jew find it, whom extortions have already reduced to the misery of Lazarus !' Then, as if suspicion had overpowered his other feelings, he suddenly exclaimed, 'For the love of God, young man, betray me not ; for the sake of the Great Father who made us all, Jew as well as Gentile, Israelite and Ishmaelite, do me no treason ! I have not means to secure the good-will of a Christian beggar, were he rating it at a single penny.' As he spoke these last words, he raised himself and grasped the Palmer's mantle with a look of the most earnest entreaty. The Pilgrim extricated himself, as if there were contamination in the touch.

'Wert thou loaded with all the wealth of thy tribe,' he said, 'what interest have I to injure thee ? In this dress I am vowed to poverty, nor do I change it for aught save a horse and a coat of mail. Yet think not that I care for thy company, or propose myself advantage by it ; remain here if thou wilt, Cedric the Saxon may protect thee.'

'Alas !' said the Jew, 'he will not let me travel in his train. Saxon or Norman will be equally ashamed of the poor Israelite ; and to travel by myself through the domains of Philip de Malveisin and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf — Good youth, I will go with you ! Let us haste — let us gird up our loins — let us flee ! Here is thy staff, why wilt thou tarry !'

'I tarry not,' said the Pilgrim, giving way to the urgency of his companion ; 'but I must secure the means of leaving this place ; follow me.'

He led the way to the adjoining cell, which, as the reader is apprised, was occupied by Gurth, the swineherd. 'Arise, Gurth,' said the Pilgrim — 'arise quickly. Undo the postern gate, and let out the Jew and me.'

Gurth, whose occupation, though now held so mean, gave him as much consequence in Saxon England as that of Eumæus in Ithaca, was offended at the familiar and commanding tone assumed by the Palmer. 'The Jew leaving Rotherwood,' said he, raising himself on his elbow and looking superciliously at him, without quitting his pallet, 'and travelling in company with the Palmer to boot —'

'I should as soon have dreamt,' said Wamba, who entered the apartment at the instant, 'of his stealing away with a gammon of bacon.'

'Nevertheless,' said Gurth, again laying down his head on the wooden log which served him for a pillow, 'both Jew and

Gentile must be content to abide the opening of the great gate ; we suffer no visitors to depart by stealth at these unseasonable hours.'

'Nevertheless,' said the Pilgrim, in a commanding tone, 'you will not, I think, refuse me that favour.'

So saying, he stooped over the bed of the recumbent swineherd, and whispered something in his ear in Saxon. Gurth started up as if electrified. The Pilgrim, raising his finger in an attitude as if to express caution, added, 'Gurth, beware ; thou art wont to be prudent. I say, undo the postern ; thou shalt know more anon.'

With hasty alacrity Gurth obeyed him, while Wamba and the Jew followed, both wondering at the sudden change in the swineherd's demeanour.

'My mule — my mule !' said the Jew, as soon as they stood without the postern.

'Fetch him his mule,' said the Pilgrim ; 'and, hearest thou, let me have another, that I may bear him company till he is beyond these parts. I will return it safely to some of Cedric's train at Ashby. And do thou ——' he whispered the rest in Gurth's ear.

'Willingly — most willingly shall it be done,' said Gurth, and instantly departed to execute the commission.

'I wish I knew,' said Wamba, when his comrade's back was turned, 'what you Palmers learn in the Holy Land.'

'To say our orisons, fool,' answered the Pilgrim, 'to repent our sins, and to mortify ourselves with fasting, vigils, and long prayers.'

'Something more potent than that,' answered the Jester ; 'for when would repentance or prayer make Gurth do a courtesy, or fasting or vigil persuade him to lend you a mule ? I trow you might as well have told his favourite black boar of thy vigils and penance, and wouldst have gotten as civil an answer.'

'Go to,' said the Pilgrim, 'thou art but a Saxon fool.'

'Thou sayest well,' said the Jester ; 'had I been born a Norman, as I think thou art, I would have had luck on my side, and been next door to a wise man.'

At this moment Gurth appeared on the opposite side of the moat with the mules. The travellers crossed the ditch upon a drawbridge of only two planks' breadth, the narrowness of which was matched with the straitness of the postern, and with a little wicket in the exterior palisade, which gave access to the forest. No sooner had they reached the mules, than the Jew,

with hasty and trembling hands, secured behind the saddle a small bag of blue buckram, which he took from under his cloak, containing, as he muttered, 'a change of raiment — only a change of raiment.' Then getting upon the animal with more alacrity and haste than could have been anticipated from his years, he lost no time in so disposing of the skirts of his gaberdine as to conceal completely from observation the burden which he had thus deposited *en croupe*.

The Pilgrim mounted with more deliberation, reaching, as he departed, his hand to Gurth, who kissed it with the utmost possible veneration. The swineherd stood gazing after the travellers until they were lost under the boughs of the forest path, when he was disturbed from his reverie by the voice of Wamba.

'Knowest thou,' said the Jester, 'my good friend Gurth, that thou art so angelically courteous and most unwontedly pious on this summer morning? I would I were a black prior or a barefoot palmer, to avail myself of thy unwonted zeal and courtesy; certes, I would make more out of it than a kiss of the hand.'

'Thou art no fool thus far, Wamba,' answered Gurth, 'though thou arguest from appearances, and the wisest of us can do no more. But it is time to look after my charge.'

So saying, he turned back to the mansion, attended by the Jester.

Meanwhile the travellers continued to press on their journey with a despatch which argued the extremity of the Jew's fears, since persons at his age are seldom fond of rapid motion. The Palmer, to whom every path and outlet in the wood appeared to be familiar, led the way through the most devious paths, and more than once excited anew the suspicion of the Israelite that he intended to betray him into some ambuscade of his enemies.

His doubts might have been indeed pardoned; for, except perhaps the flying fish, there was no race existing on the earth, in the air, or the waters, who were the object of such an unintermitting, general, and relentless persecution as the Jews of this period. Upon the slightest and most unreasonable pretences, as well as upon accusations the most absurd and groundless, their persons and property were exposed to every turn of popular fury; for Norman, Saxon, Dane, and Briton, however adverse these races were to each other, contended which should look with greatest detestation upon a people whom it was accounted a point of religion to hate, to revile, to despise

to plunder, and to persecute. The kings of the Norman race, and the independent nobles, who followed their example in all acts of tyranny, maintained against this devoted people a persecution of a more regular, calculated, and self-interested kind. It is a well-known story of King John, that he confined a wealthy Jew in one of the royal castles, and daily caused one of his teeth to be torn out, until, when the jaw of the unhappy Israelite was half disfurnished, he consented to pay a large sum, which it was the tyrant's object to extort from him. The little ready money which was in the country was chiefly in possession of this persecuted people, and the nobility hesitated not to follow the example of their sovereign in wringing it from them by every species of oppression, and even personal torture. Yet the passive courage inspired by the love of gain induced the Jews to dare the various evils to which they were subjected, in consideration of the immense profits which they were enabled to realise in a country naturally so wealthy as England. In spite of every kind of discouragement, and even of the special court of taxations already mentioned, called the Jews' Exchequer, erected for the very purpose of despoiling and distressing them, the Jews increased, multiplied, and accumulated huge sums, which they transferred from one hand to another by means of bills of exchange — an invention for which commerce is said to be indebted to them, and which enabled them to transfer their wealth from land to land, that, when threatened with oppression in one country, their treasure might be secured in another.

The obstinacy and avarice of the Jews being thus in a measure placed in opposition to the fanaticism and tyranny of those under whom they lived, seemed to increase in proportion to the persecution with which they were visited; and the immense wealth they usually acquired in commerce, while it frequently placed them in danger, was at other times used to extend their influence, and to secure to them a certain degree of protection. On these terms they lived; and their character, influenced accordingly, was watchful, suspicious, and timid — yet obstinate, uncomplying, and skilful in evading the dangers to which they were exposed.

When the travellers had pushed on at a rapid rate through many devious paths, the Palmer at length broke silence.

'That large decayed oak,' he said, 'marks the boundaries over which Front-de-Bœuf claims authority; we are long since far from those of Malvoisin. There is now no fear of pursuit.'

'May the wheels of their chariots be taken off,' said the Jew,

'like those of the host of Pharaoh, that they may drive heavily ! But leave me not, good Pilgrim. Think but of that fierce and savage Templar, with his Saracen slaves ; they will regard neither territory, nor manor, nor lordship.'

'Our road,' said the Palmer, 'should here separate ; for it beseems not men of my character and thine to travel together longer than needs must be. Besides, what succour couldst thou have from me, a peaceful pilgrim, against two armed heathens !'

'O, good youth,' answered the Jew, 'thou canst defend me, and I know thou wouldst. Poor as I am, I will requite it ; not with money, for money, so help me my Father Abraham ! I have none ; but——'

'Money and recompense,' said the Palmer, interrupting him, 'I have already said I require not of thee. Guide thee I can, and, it may be, even in some sort defend thee ; since to protect a Jew against a Saracen can scarce be accounted unworthy of a Christian. Therefore, Jew, I will see thee safe under some fitting escort. We are now not far from the town of Sheffield, where thou mayest easily find many of thy tribe with whom to take refuge.'

'The blessing of Jacob be upon thee, good youth !' said the Jew ; 'in Sheffield I can harbour with my kinsman Zareth, and find some means of travelling forth with safety.'

'Be it so,' said the Palmer ; 'at Sheffield then we part, and half an hour's riding will bring us in sight of that town.'

The half hour was spent in perfect silence on both parts ; the Pilgrim perhaps disdaining to address the Jew, except in case of absolute necessity, and the Jew not presuming to force a conversation with a person whose journey to the Holy Sepulchre gave a sort of sanctity to his character. They paused on the top of a gently rising bank, and the Pilgrim, pointing to the town of Sheffield, which lay beneath them, repeated the words, 'Here, then, we part.'

'Not till you have had the poor Jew's thanks,' said Isaac ; 'for I presume not to ask you to go with me to my kinsman Zareth's, who might aid me with some means of repaying your good offices.'

'I have already said,' answered the Pilgrim, 'that I desire no recompense. If, among the huge list of thy debtors, thou wilt, for my sake, spare the gyves and the dungeon to some unhappy Christian who stands in thy danger, I shall hold this morning's service to thee well bestowed.'

'Stay—stay,' said the Jew, laying hold of his garment; 'something would I do more than this—something for thyself. God knows the Jew is poor—yes, Isaac is the beggar of his tribe—but forgive me should I guess what thou most lackest at this moment.'

'If thou wert to guess truly,' said the Palmer, 'it is what thou canst not supply, wert thou as wealthy as thou sayest thou art poor.'

'As I say!' echoed the Jew. 'O! believe it, I say but the truth; I am a plundered, indebted, distressed man. Hard hands have wrung from me my goods, my money, my ships, and all that I possessed. Yet I can tell thee what thou lackest, and, it may be, supply it too. Thy wish even now is for a horse and armour.'

The Palmer started, and turned suddenly towards the Jew. 'What fiend prompted that guess?' said he, hastily.

'No matter,' said the Jew, smiling, 'so that it be a true one; and, as I can guess thy want, so I can supply it.'

'But consider,' said the Palmer, 'my character, my dress, my vow.'

'I know you Christians,' replied the Jew, 'and that the noblest of you will take the staff and sandal in superstitious penance, and walk afoot to visit the graves of dead men.'

'Blaspheme not, Jew!' said the Pilgrim, sternly.

'Forgive me,' said the Jew; 'I spoke rashly. But there dropt words from you last night and this morning that, like sparks from flint, showed the metal within; and in the bosom of that Palmer's gown is hidden a knight's chain and spurs of gold. They glanced as you stooped over my bed in the morning.'

The Pilgrim could not forbear smiling. 'Were thy garments searched by as curious an eye, Isaac,' said he, 'what discoveries might not be made?'

'No more of that,' said the Jew, changing colour; and drawing forth his writing materials in haste, as if to stop the conversation, he began to write upon a piece of paper which he supported on the top of his yellow cap, without dismounting from his mule. When he had finished, he delivered the scroll, which was in the Hebrew character, to the Pilgrim, saying, 'In the town of Leicester all men know the rich Jew, Kirjath Jairam of Lombardy; give him this scroll. He hath on sale six Milan harnesses, the worst would suit a crowned head; ten goodly steeds, the worst might mount a king, were he to do battle

for his throne. Of these he will give thee thy choice, with everything else that can furnish thee forth for the tournament; when it is over, thou wilt return them safely — unless thou shouldst have wherewith to pay their value to the owner.'

'But, Isaac,' said the Pilgrim, smiling, 'dost thou know that in these sports the arms and steed of the knight who is unhorsed are forfeit to his victor? Now I may be unfortunate, and so lose what I cannot replace or repay.'

The Jew looked somewhat astounded at this possibility; but collecting his courage, he replied hastily, 'No — no — no. It is impossible — I will not think so. The blessing of Our Father will be upon thee. Thy lance will be powerful as the rod of Moses.'

So saying, he was turning his mule's head away, when the Palmer, in his turn, took hold of his gaberdine. 'Nay, but, Isaac, thou knowest not all the risk. The steed may be slain, the armour injured; for I will spare neither horse nor man. Besides, those of thy tribe give nothing for nothing; something there must be paid for their use.'

The Jew twisted himself in the saddle, like a man in a fit of the colic; but his better feelings predominated over those which were most familiar to him. 'I care not,' he said — 'I care not; let me go. If there is damage, it will cost you nothing; if there is usage money, Kirjath Jairam will forgive it for the sake of his kinsman Isaac. Fare thee well! Yet, hark thee, good youth,' said he, turning about, 'thrust thyself not too forward into this vain hurly-burly: I speak not for endangering the steed and coat of armour, but for the sake of thine own life and limbs.'

'Gramercy for thy caution,' said the Palmer, again smiling; 'I will use thy courtesy frankly, and it will go hard with me but I will requite it.'

They parted, and took different roads for the town of Sheffield.

CHAPTER VII

Knights, with a long retinue of their squires,
In gaudy liveries march and quaint attires ;
One laced the helm, another held the lance,
A third the shining buckler did advance.
The courser paw'd the ground with restless feet,
And snorting foam'd and champ'd the golden bit.
The smiths and armourers on palfreys ride,
Files in their hands and hammers at their side ;
And nails for loosen'd spears, and thongs for shields provide.
The yeomen guard the streets in seemly bands ;
And clowns come crowding on, with cudgels in their hands.

Palamon and Arcite.

THE condition of the English nation was at this time sufficiently miserable. King Richard was absent a prisoner, and in the power of the perfidious and cruel Duke of Austria. Even the very place of his captivity was uncertain, and his fate but very imperfectly known to the generality of his subjects, who were, in the meantime, a prey to every species of subaltern oppression.

Prince John, in league with Philip of France, Cœur-de-Lion's mortal enemy, was using every species of influence with the Duke of Austria to prolong the captivity of his brother Richard, to whom he stood indebted for so many favours. In the meantime, he was strengthening his own faction in the kingdom, of which he proposed to dispute the succession, in case of the King's death, with the legitimate heir, Arthur Duke of Brittany, son of Geoffrey Plantagenet, the elder brother of John. This usurpation, it is well known, he afterwards effected. His own character being light, profligate, and perfidious, John easily attached to his person and faction not only all who had reason to dread the resentment of Richard for criminal proceedings during his absence, but also the numerous class of 'lawless resolute' whom the crusades had turned back on their country, accomplished in the vices of the

East, impoverished in substance, and hardened in character, and who placed their hopes of harvest in civil commotion.

To these causes of public distress and apprehension must be added the multitude of outlaws who, driven to despair by the oppression of the feudal nobility and the severe exercise of the forest laws, banded together in large gangs, and, keeping possession of the forests and the wastes, set at defiance the justice and magistracy of the country. The nobles themselves, each fortified within his own castle, and playing the petty sovereign over his own dominions, were the leaders of bands scarce less lawless and oppressive than those of the avowed depredators. To maintain these retainers, and to support the extravagance and magnificence which their pride induced them to affect, the nobility borrowed sums of money from the Jews at the most usurious interest, which gnawed into their estates like consuming cankers, scarce to be cured unless when circumstances gave them an opportunity of getting free by exercising upon their creditors some act of unprincipled violence.

Under the various burdens imposed by this unhappy state of affairs, the people of England suffered deeply for the present, and had yet more dreadful cause to fear for the future. To augment their misery, a contagious disorder of a dangerous nature spread through the land; and, rendered more virulent by the uncleanness, the indifferent food, and the wretched lodging of the lower classes, swept off many, whose fate the survivors were tempted to envy, as exempting them from the evils which were to come.

Yet, amid these accumulated distresses, the poor as well as the rich, the vulgar as well as the noble, in the event of a tournament, which was the grand spectacle of that age, felt as much interested as the half-starved citizen of Madrid, who has not a real left to buy provisions for his family, feels in the issue of a bull-fight. Neither duty nor infirmity could keep youth or age from such exhibitions. The passage of arms, as it was called, which was to take place at Ashby, in the county of Leicester, as champions of the first renown were to take the field in the presence of Prince John himself, who was expected to grace the lists, had attracted universal attention, and an immense confluence of persons of all ranks hastened upon the appointed morning to the place of combat.

The scene was singularly romantic. On the verge of a wood, which approached to within a mile of the town of Ashby, was an extensive meadow of the finest and most beautiful green turf,

surrounded on one side by the forest, and fringed on the other by straggling oak-trees, some of which had grown to an immense size. The ground, as if fashioned on purpose for the martial display which was intended, sloped gradually down on all sides to a level bottom, which was inclosed for the lists with strong palisades, forming a space of a quarter of a mile in length, and about half as broad. The form of the inclosure was an oblong square, save that the corners were considerably rounded off, in order to afford more convenience to the spectators. The openings for the entry of the combatants were at the northern and southern extremities of the lists, accessible by strong wooden gates, each wide enough to admit two horsemen riding abreast. At each of these portals were stationed two heralds, attended by six trumpets, as many pursuivants, and a strong body of men-at-arms, for maintaining order, and ascertaining the quality of the knights who proposed to engage in this martial game.

On a platform beyond the southern entrance, formed by a natural elevation of the ground, were pitched five magnificent pavilions, adorned with pennons of russet and black, the chosen colours of the five knights challengers. The cords of the tents were of the same colour. Before each pavilion was suspended the shield of the knight by whom it was occupied, and beside it stood his squire, quaintly disguised as a salvage or silvan man, or in some other fantastic dress, according to the taste of his master and the character he was pleased to assume during the game.¹ The central pavilion, as the place of honour, had been assigned to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whose renown in all games of chivalry, no less than his connexion with the knights who had undertaken this passage of arms, had occasioned him to be eagerly received into the company of the challengers, and even adopted as their chief and leader, though he had so recently joined them. On one side of his tent were pitched those of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf and Richard de Malvoisin, and on the other was the pavilion of Hugh de Grantmesnil, a noble baron in the vicinity, whose ancestor had been Lord High Steward of England in the time of the Conqueror and his son William Rufus. Ralph de Vipont, a knight of St. John of Jerusalem, who had some ancient possessions at a place called Heather, near Ashby-de-la-Zouche, occupied the fifth pavilion. From the entrance into

¹ This sort of masquerade is supposed to have occasioned the introduction of supporters into the science of heraldry.

the lists a gently sloping passage, ten yards in breadth, led up to the platform on which the tents were pitched. It was strongly secured by a palisade on each side, as was the esplanade in front of the pavilions, and the whole was guarded by men-at-arms.

The northern access to the lists terminated in a similar entrance of thirty feet in breadth, at the extremity of which was a large inclosed space for such knights as might be disposed to enter the lists with the challengers, behind which were placed tents containing refreshments of every kind for their accommodation, with armourers, farriers, and other attendants, in readiness to give their services wherever they might be necessary.

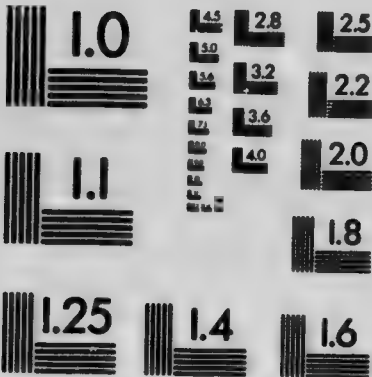
The exterior of the lists was in part occupied by temporary galleries, spread with tapestry and carpets, and accommodated with cushions for the convenience of those ladies and nobles who were expected to attend the tournament. A narrow space betwixt these galleries and the lists gave accommodation for yeomanry and spectators of a better degree than the mere vulgar, and might be compared to the pit of a theatre. The promiscuous multitude arranged themselves upon large banks of turf prepared for the purpose, which, aided by the natural elevation of the ground, enabled them to overlook the galleries, and obtain a fair view into the lists. Besides the accommodation which these stations afforded, many hundreds had perched themselves on the branches of the trees which surrounded the meadow; and even the steeple of a country church, at some distance, was crowded with spectators.

It only remains to notice respecting the general arrangement, that one gallery in the very centre of the eastern side of the lists, and consequently exactly opposite to the spot where the shock of the combat was to take place, was raised higher than the others, more richly decorated, and graced by a sort of throne and canopy, on which the royal arms were emblazoned. Squires, pages, and yeomen in rich liveries waited around this place of honour, which was designed for Prince John and his attendants. Opposite to this royal gallery was another, elevated to the same height, on the western side of the lists; and more gaily, if less sumptuously, decorated than that destined for the Prince himself. A train of pages and of young maidens, the most beautiful who could be selected, gaily dressed in fancy habits of green and pink, surrounded a throne decorated in the same colours. Among pennons and flags bearing wounded hearts, burning hearts, bleeding hearts, bows and quivers, and all the common-



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place emblems of the triumphs of Cupid, a blazoned inscription informed the spectators that this seat of honour was designed for *La Reine de la Beauté et des Amours*. But who was to represent the Queen of Beauty and of Love on the present occasion no one was prepared to guess.

Meanwhile, spectators of every description thronged forward to occupy their respective stations, and not without many quarrels concerning those which they were entitled to hold. Some of these were settled by the men-at-arms with brief ceremony; the shafts of their battle-axes and pummels of their swords being readily employed as arguments to convince the more refractory. Others, which involved the rival claims of more elevated persons, were determined by the heralds, or by the two marshals of the field, William de Wyvil and Stephen de Martival, who, armed at all points, rode up and down the lists to enforce and preserve good order among the spectators.

Gradually the galleries became filled with knights and nobles, in their robes of peace, whose long and rich-tinted mantles were contrasted with the gayer and more splendid habits of the ladies, who, in a greater proportion than even the men themselves, thronged to witness a sport which one would have thought too bloody and dangerous to afford their sex much pleasure. The lower and interior space was soon filled by substantial yeomen and burghers, and such of the lesser gentry as, from modesty, poverty, or dubious title, durst not assume any higher place. It was of course amongst these that the most frequent disputes for precedence occurred.

'Dog of an unbeliever,' said an old man, whose threadbare tunic bore witness to his poverty, as his sword, and dagger, and golden chain intimated his pretensions to rank — 'whelp of a she-wolf! darest thou press upon a Christian, and a Norman gentleman of the blood of Montdidier?'

This rough expostulation was addressed to no other than our acquaintance Isaac, who, richly and even magnificently dressed in a gaberdine ornamented with lace and lined with fur, was endeavouring to make place in the foremost row beneath the gallery for his daughter, the beautiful Rebecca, who had joined him at Ashby, and who was now hanging on her father's arm, not a little terrified by the popular displeasure which seemed generally excited by her father's presumption. But Isaac, though we have seen him sufficiently timid on other occasions, knew well that at present he had nothing to fear. It was not in places of general resort, or where their equals were

assembled, that any avaricious or malevolent noble durst offer him injury. At such meetings the Jews were under the protection of the general law; and if that proved a weak assurance, it usually happened that there were among the persons assembled some barons who, for their own interested motives, were ready to act as their protectors. On the present occasion, Isaac felt more than usually confident, being aware that Prince John was even then in the very act of negotiating a large loan from the Jews of York, to be secured upon certain jewels and lands. Isaac's own share in this transaction was considerable, and he well knew that the Prince's eager desire to bring it to a conclusion would ensure him his protection in the dilemma in which he stood.

Emboldened by these considerations, the Jew pursued his point, and jostled the Norman Christian without respect either to his descent, quality, or religion. The complaints of the old man, however, excited the indignation of the bystanders. One of these, a stout well-set yeoman, arrayed in Lincoln green, having twelve arrows stuck in his belt, with a baldric and badge of silver, and a bow of six feet length in his hand, turned short round, and while his countenance, which his constant exposure to weather had rendered brown as a hazel nut, grew darker with anger, he advised the Jew to remember that all the wealth he had acquired by sucking the blood of his miserable victims had but swelled him like a bloated spider, which might be overlooked while it kept in a corner, but would be crushed if it ventured into the light. This intimation, delivered in Norman-English with a firm voice and a stern aspect, made the Jew shrink back; and he would have probably withdrawn himself altogether from a vicinity so dangerous, had not the attention of every one been called to the sudden entrance of Prince John, who at that moment entered the lists, attended by a numerous and gay train, consisting partly of laymen, partly of churchmen, as light in their dress, and as gay in their demeanour, as their companions. Among the latter was the Prior of Jorvaulx, in the most gallant trim which a dignitary of the church could venture to exhibit. Fur and gold were not spared in his garments; and the points of his boots, out-heroding the preposterous fashion of the time, turned up so very far as to be attached not to his knees merely, but to his very girdle, and effectually prevented him from putting his foot into the stirrup. This, however, was a slight inconvenience to the gallant Abbot, who, perhaps even rejoicing in the opportunity to display his

accomplished horsemanship before so many spectators, especially of the fair sex, dispensed with these supports to a timid rider. The rest of Prince John's retinue consisted of the favourite leaders of his mercenary troops, some marauding barons and profligate attendants upon the court, with several Knights Templars and Knights of St. John.

It may be here remarked, that the knights of these two orders were accounted hostile to King Richard, having adopted the side of Philip of France in the long train of disputes which took place in Palestine betwixt that monarch and the lion-hearted King of England. It was the well-known consequence of this discord that Richard's repeated victories had been rendered fruitless, his romantic attempts to besiege Jerusalem disappointed, and the fruit of all the glory which he had acquired had dwindled into an uncertain truce with the Sultan Saladin. With the same policy which had dictated the conduct of their brethren in the Holy Land, the Templars and Hospitallers in England and Normandy attached themselves to the faction of Prince John, having little reason to desire the return of Richard to England, or the succession of Arthur, his legitimate heir. For the opposite reason, Prince John hated and contemned the few Saxon families of consequence which subsisted in England, and omitted no opportunity of mortifying and affronting them; being conscious that his person and pretensions were disliked by them, as well as by the greater part of the English commons, who feared farther innovation upon their rights and liberties from a sovereign of John's licentious and tyrannical disposition.

Attended by this gallant equipage, himself well mounted, and splendidly dressed in crimson and in gold, bearing upon his hand a falcon, and having his head covered by a rich fur bonnet, adorned with a circle of precious stones, from which his long curled hair escaped and overspread his shoulders Prince John, upon a grey and high-mettled palfrey, caracoled within the lists at the head of his jovial party, laughing loud with his train, and eyeing with all the boldness of royal criticism the beauties who adorned the lofty galleries.

Those who remarked in the physiognomy of the Prince a dissolute audacity, mingled with extreme haughtiness and indifference to the feelings of others, could not yet deny to his countenance that sort of comeliness which belongs to an open set of features, well formed by nature, modelled by art to the usual rules of courtesy, so far frank and honest that they

seemed as if they disclaimed to conceal the internal workings of the soul. Such an expression is often assumed for manly frankness, when in truth it arises from the restless indifference of a libertine disposition, conscious of superiority of birth, of wealth, or of some other adventitious advantage, totally unconnected with personal merit. To those who did not think so deeply, and they were the greater number by a hundred to one, the splendour of Prince John's *rheno* (*i.e.* fur tippet), the richness of his cloak, lined with the most costly sables, his maroquin boots and golden spurs, together with the grace with which he managed his palfrey, were sufficient to merit clamorous applause.

In his joyous caracole round the lists, the attention of the Prince was called by the commotion, not yet subsided, which had attended the ambitious movement of Isaac towards the higher places of the assembly. The quick eye of Prince John instantly recognised the Jew, but was much more agreeably attracted by the beautiful daughter of Zion, who, terrified by the tumult, clung close to the arm of her aged father.

The figure of Rebecca might indeed have compared with the proudest beauties of England, even though it had been judged by as shrewd a connoisseur as Prince John. Her form was exquisitely symmetrical, and was shown to advantage by a sort of Eastern dress, which she wore according to the fashion of the females of her nation. Her turban of yellow silk suited well with the darkness of her complexion. The brilliancy of her eyes, the superb arch of her eyebrows, her well-formed aquiline nose, her teeth as white as pearl, and the profusion of her sable tresses, which, each arranged in its own little spiral of twisted curls, fell down upon as much of a lovely neck and bosom as a *simarre* of the richest Persian silk, exhibiting flowers in their natural colours embossed upon a purple ground, permitted to be visible — all these constituted a combination of loveliness which yielded not to the most beautiful of the maidens who surrounded her. It is true, that of the golden and pearl-studded clasps which closed her vest from the throat to the waist, the three uppermost were left unfastened on account of the heat, which something enlarged the prospect to which we allude. A diamond necklace, with pendants of inestimable value, were by this means also made more conspicuous. The feather of an ostrich, fastened in her turban by an *agraffe* set with brilliants, was another distinction of the beautiful Jewess, scoffed and sneered at by the proud dames who

sat above her, but secretly envied by those who affected to deride them.

'By the bald scalp of Abraham,' said Prince John, 'yonder Jewess must be the very model of that perfection whose charms drove frantic the wisest king that ever lived! What sayest thou, Prior Aymer? By the Temple of that wise king, which our wiser brother Richard proved unable to recover, she is the very Bride of the Canticles!'

'The Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley,' answered the Prior, in a sort of snuffling tone; 'but your Grace must remember she is still but a Jewess.'

'Ay!' added Prince John, without heeding him, 'and there is my Mammon of unrighteousness too — the Marquis of Marks, the Baron of Byzants, contesting for place with penniless dogs, whose threadbare cloaks have not a single cross in their pouches to keep the devil from dancing there. By the body of St. Mark, my prince of supplies, with his lovely Jewess, shall have a place in the gallery! What is she, Isaac? Thy wife or thy daughter, that Eastern houri that thou lockest under thy arm as thou wouldst thy treasure-casket!'

'My daughter Rebecca, so please your Grace,' answered Isaac, with a low congee, nothing embarrassed by the Prince's salutation, in which, however, there was at least as much mockery as courtesy.

'The wiser man thou,' said John, with a peal of laughter, in which his gay followers obsequiously joined. 'But, daughter or wife, she should be preferred according to her beauty and thy merits. Who sits above there?' he continued, bending his eye on the gallery. 'Saxon churls, lolling at their lazy length! Out upon them! let them sit close, and make room for my prince of usurers and his lovely daughter. I'll make the hinds know they must share the high places of the synagogue with those whom the synagogue properly belongs to.'

Those who occupied the gallery, to whom this injurious and unpolite speech was addressed, were the family of Cedric the Saxon, with that of his ally and kinsman, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, a personage who, on account of his descent from the last Saxon monarchs of England, was held in the highest respect by all the Saxon natives of the north of England. But with the blood of this ancient royal race many of their infirmities had descended to Athelstane. He was comely in countenance, bulky and strong in person, and in the flower of his age; yet inanimate in expression, dull-eyed, heavy-browed, inactive and

sluggish in all his motions, and so slow in resolution, that the soubriquet of one of his ancestors was conferred upon him, and he was very generally called Athelstane the Unready. His friends—and he had many who, as well as Cedric, were passionately attached to him—contended that this sluggish temper arose not from want of courage, but from mere want of decision; others alleged that his hereditary vice of drunkenness had obscured his faculties, never of a very acute order, and that the passive courage and meek good-nature which remained behind were merely the dregs of a character that might have been deserving of praise, but of which all the valuable parts had flown off in the progress of a long course of brutal debauchery.

It was to this person, such as we have described him, that the Prince addressed his imperious command to make place for Isaac and Rebecca. Athelstane, utterly confounded at an order which the manners and feelings of the times rendered so injuriously insulting, unwilling to obey, yet undetermined how to resist, opposed only the *vis inertiae* to the will of John; and, without stirring or making any motion whatever of obedience, opened his large grey eyes and stared at the Prince with an astonishment which had in it something extremely ludicrous. But the impatient John regarded it in no such light.

'The Saxon porker,' he said, 'is either asleep or minds me not. Prick him with your lance, De Bracy,' speaking to a knight who rode near him, the leader of a band of free companions, or *condottieri*; that is, of mercenaries belonging to no particular nation, but attached for the time to any prince by whom they are paid. There was a murmur even among the attendants of Prince John; but De Bracy, whose profession freed him from all scruples, extended his long lance over the space which separated the gallery from the lists, and would have executed the commands of the Prince before Athelstane the Unready had recovered presence of mind sufficient even to draw back his person from the weapon, had not Cedric, as prompt as his companion was tardy, unsheathed, with the speed of lightning, the short sword which he wore, and at a single blow severed the point of the lance from the handle. The blood rushed into the countenance of Prince John. He swore one of his deepest oaths, and was about to utter some threat corresponding in violence, when he was diverted from his purpose, partly by his own attendants, who gathered around him conjuring him to be patient, partly by a general exclamation

of the crowd, uttered in loud applause of the spirited conduct of Cedric. The Prince rolled his eyes in indignation, as if to collect some safe and easy victim; and chancing to encounter the firm glance of the same archer whom we have already noticed, and who seemed to persist in his gesture of applause, in spite of the frowning aspect which the Prince bent upon him, he demanded his reason for clamouring thus.

'I always add my hollo,' said the yeoman, 'when I see a good shot or a gallant blow.'

'Sayest thou?' answered the Prince; 'then thou canst hit the white thyself, I'll warrant.'

'A woodsman's mark, and at woodsman's distance, I can hit,' answered the yeoman.

'And Wat Tyrrel's mark, at a hundred yards,' said a voice from behind, but by whom uttered could not be discerned.

This allusion to the fate of William Rufus, his relative, at once incensed and alarmed Prince John. He satisfied himself, however, with commanding the men-at-arms, who surrounded the lists, to keep an eye on the braggart, pointing to the yeoman.

'By St. Grizzel,' he added, 'we will try his own skill, who is so ready to give his voice to the feats of others!'

'I shall not fly the trial,' said the yeoman, with the composure which marked his whole deportment.

'Meanwhile, stand up, ye Saxon churls,' said the fiery Prince; 'for, by the light of Heaven, since I have said it, the Jew shall have his seat amongst ye!'

'By no means, an it please your Grace! It is not fit for such as we to sit with the rulers of the land,' said the Jew, whose ambition for precedence, though it had led him to dispute place with the extenuated and impoverished descendant of the line of Montdidier, by no means stimulated him to an intrusion upon the privileges of the wealthy Saxons.

'Up, infidel dog, where I command you,' said Prince John, 'or I will have thy skin stripped off and tanned for horse-furniture!'

Thus urged, the Jew ascended the steep and narrow steps which led up to the gallery.

'Let me see,' said the Prince, 'who dare stop him!' fixing his eye on Cedric, whose attitude intimated his intention to hurl the Jew down headlong.

The catastrophe was prevented by the clown Wamba, who, springing betwixt his master and Isaac, and exclaiming, in

answer to the Prince's defiance, 'Marry, that will I!' opposed to the beard of the Jew a shield of brawn, which he plucked from beneath his cloak, and with which, doubtless, he had furnished himself lest the tournament should have proved longer than his appetite could endure abstinence. Finding the abomination of his tribe opposed to his very nose, while the Jester at the same time flourished his wooden sword above his head, the Jew recoiled, missed his footing, and rolled down the steps—an excellent jest to the spectators, who set up a loud laughter, in which Prince John and his attendants heartily joined.

'Deal me the prize, cousin Prince,' said Wamba; 'I have vanquished my foe in fair fight with sword and shield,' he added, brandishing the brawn in one hand and the wooden sword in the other.

'Who and what art thou, noble champion?' said Prince John, still laughing.

'A fool by right of descent,' answered the Jester; 'I am Wamba, the son of Witless, who was the son of Weatherbrain, who was the son of an alderman.'

'Make room for the Jew in front of the lower ring,' said Prince John, not unwilling, perhaps, to seize an apology to desist from his original purpose; 'to place the vanquished beside the victor were false heraldry.'

'Knave upon fool were worse,' answered the Jester, 'and Jew upon bacon worst of all.'

'Gramercy! good fellow,' cried Prince John, 'thou pleasest me. Here, Isaac, lend me a handful of byzants.'

As the Jew, stunned by the request, afraid to refuse and unwilling to comply, fumbled in the furred bag which hung by his girdle, and was perhaps endeavouring to ascertain how few coins might pass for a handful, the Prince stooped from his jennet and settled Isaac's doubts by snatching the pouch itself from his side; and flinging to Wamba a couple of the gold pieces which it contained, he pursued his career round the lists, leaving the Jew to the derision of those around him, and himself receiving as much applause from the spectators as if he had done some honest and honourable action.

CHAPTER VIII

At this the challenger with fierce defy
His trumpet sounds ; the challenged makes reply.
With clangour rings the field, resounds the vaulted sky.
Their visors closed, their lances in the rest,
Or at the helmet pointed or the crest,
They vanish from the barrier, speed the race,
And spurring see decrease the middle space.

Palamon and Arcite.

IN the midst of Prince John's cavalcade, he suddenly stopt, and, appealing to the Prior of Jorvaulx, declared the principal business of the day had been forgotten.

'By my halidom,' said he, 'we have forgotten, Sir Prior, to name the fair Sovereign of Love and of Beauty, by whose white hand the palm is to be distributed. For my part, I am liberal in my ideas, and I care not if I give my vote for the black-eyed Rebecca.'

'Holy Virgin,' answered the Prior, turning up his eyes in horror, 'a Jewess ! We should deserve to be stoned out of the lists ; and I am not yet old enough to be a martyr. Besides, I swear by my patron saint that she is far inferior to the lovely Saxon, Rowena.'

'Saxon or Jew,' answered the Prince — 'Saxon or Jew, dog or hog, what matters it ! I say, name Rebecca, were it only to mortify the Saxon churls.'

A murmur arose even among his own immediate attendants.

'This passes a jest, my lord,' said de Bracy ; 'no knight here will lay lance in rest if such an insult is attempted.'

'It is the mere wantonness of insult,' said one of the oldest and most important of Prince John's followers, Waldemar Fitzurse, 'and if your Grace attempts it, cannot but prove ruinous to your projects.'

'I entertained you, sir,' said John, reining up his palfrey haughtily, 'for my follower, but not for my counsellor.'

'Those who follow your Grace in the paths which you tread,' said Waldemar, but speaking in a low voice, 'acquire the right of counsellors; for your interest and safety are not more deeply engaged than their own.'

From the tone in which this was spoken, John saw the necessity of acquiescence. 'I did but jest,' he said; 'and you turn upon me like so many adders! Name whom you will, in the fiend's name, and please yourselves.'

'Nay, nay,' said D. Bracy, 'let the fair sovereign's throne remain unoccupied until the conqueror shall be named, and then let him choose the lady by whom it shall be filled. It will add another grace to his triumph, and teach fair ladies to prize the love of valiant knights, who can exalt them to such distinction.'

'If Brian de Bois-Guilbert gain the prize,' said the Prior, 'I will gage my rosary that I name the Sovereign of Love and Beauty.'

'Bois-Guilbert,' answered De Bracy, 'is a good lance; but there are others around these lists, Sir Prior, who will not fear to encounter him.'

'Silence, sirs,' said Waldemar, 'and let the Prince assume his seat. The knights and spectators are alike impatient, the time advances, and highly fit it is that the sports should commence.'

Prince John, though not yet a monarch, had in Waldemar Fitzurse all the inconveniences of a favourite minister, who, in serving his sovereign, must always do so in his own way. The Prince acquiesced, however, although his disposition was precisely of that kind which is apt to be obstinate upon trifles, and, assuming his throne, and being surrounded by his followers, gave signal to the heralds to proclaim the laws of the tournament, which were briefly as follows:

First, the five challengers were to undertake all comers.

Secondly, any knight proposing to combat might, if he pleased, select a special antagonist from among the challengers by touching his shield. If he did so with the reverse of his lance, the trial of skill was made with what were called arms of courtesy, that is, with lances at whose extremity a piece of round flat board was fixed, so that no danger was encountered, save from the shock of the horses and riders. But if the shield was touched with the sharp end of the lance, the combat was understood to be at *outrance*, that is, knights were to fight with sharp weapons, as in actual battle.

Thirdly, when the knights present had accomplished their vow, by each of them breaking five lances, the Prince was to declare the victor in the first day's tourney, who should receive as prize a war-horse of exquisite beauty and matchless strength; and in addition to this reward of valour, it was now declared, he should have the peculiar honour of naming the Queen of Love and Beauty, by whom the prize should be given on the ensuing day.

Fourthly, it was announced that, on the second day, there should be a general tournament, in which all the knights present, who were desirous to win praise, might take part; and being divided into two bands, of equal numbers, might fight it out manfully until the signal was given by Prince John to cease the combat. The elected Queen of Love and Beauty was then to crown the knight, whom the Prince should adjudge to have borne himself best in this second day, with a coronet composed of thin gold plate, cut into the shape of a laurel crown. On this second day the knightly games ceased. But on that which was to follow, feats of archery, of bull-baiting, and other popular amusements were to be practised, for the more immediate amusement of the populace. In this manner did Prince John endeavour to lay the foundation of a popularity which he was perpetually throwing down by some inconsiderate act of wanton aggression upon the feelings and prejudices of the people.

The lists now presented a most splendid spectacle. The sloping galleries were crowded with all that was noble, great, wealthy, and beautiful in the northern and midland parts of England; and the contrast of the various dresses of these dignified spectators rendered the view as gay as it was rich, while the interior and lower space, filled with the substantial burgesses and yeomen of merry England formed, in their more plain attire, a dark fringe, or border, around this circle of brilliant embroidery, relieving, and at the same time setting off, its splendour.

The heralds finished their proclamation with their usual cry of 'Largesse, largesse, gallant knights!' and gold and silver pieces were showered on them from the galleries, it being a high point of chivalry to exhibit liberality towards those whom the age accounted at once the secretaries and the historians of honour. The bounty of the spectators was acknowledged by the customary shouts of 'Love of ladies — Death of champions — Honour to the generous — Glory to the

brave!' To which the more humble spectators added their acclamations, and a numerous band of trumpeters the flourish of their martial instruments. When these sounds had ceased, the heralds withdrew from the lists in gay and glittering procession, and none remained within them save the marshals of the field, who, armed cap à pie, sat on horseback, motionless as statues, at the opposite ends of the lists. Meantime, the inclosed space at the northern extremity of the lists, large as it was, was now completely crowded with knights, desirous to prove their skill against the challengers, and, when viewed from the galleries, presented the appearance of a sea of waving plumage, intermixed with glistening helmets and tall lances, to the extremities of which were, in many cases, attached small pennons of about a span's breadth, which, fluttering in the air as the breeze caught them, joined with the restless motion of the feathers to add liveliness to the scene.

At length the barriers were opened, and five knights, chosen by lot, advanced slowly into the arena; a single champion riding in front, and the other four following in pairs. All were splendidly armed, and my Saxon authority (in the *Warlour Manuscript*) records at great length their devices, their colours, and the embroidery of their horse trappings. It is unnecessary to be particular on these subjects. To borrow lines from a contemporary poet, who has written but too little —

The knights are dust,
And their good swords are rust,
Their souls are with the saints, we trust.¹

Their escutcheons have long mouldered from the walls of their castles. Their castles themselves are but green mounds and shattered ruins: the place that once knew them, knows them no more — nay, many a race since theirs has died out and been forgotten in the very land which they occupied with all the authority of feudal proprietors and feudal lords. What, then, would it avail the reader to know their names, or the evanescent symbols of their martial rank?

Now, however, no whit anticipating the oblivion which awaited their names and feats, the champions advanced through the lists, restraining their fiery steeds, and compelling them to move slowly, while, at the same time, they exhibited their paces, together with the grace and dexterity of the

¹ See Lines from Coleridge. Note 6.

riders. As the procession entered the lists, the sound of a wild barbaric music was heard from behind the tents of the challengers, where the performers were concealed. It was of Eastern origin, having been brought from the Holy Land; and the mixture of the cymbals and bells seemed to bid welcome at once, and defiance, to the knights as they advanced. With the eyes of an immense concourse of spectators fixed upon them, the five knights advanced up the platform upon which the tents of the challengers stood, and there separating themselves, each touched slightly, and with the reverse of his lance, the shield of the antagonist to whom he wished to oppose himself. The lower orders of spectators in general — nay, many of the higher class, and it is even said several of the ladies — were rather disappointed at the champions choosing the arms of courtesy. For the same sort of persons who, in the present day, applaud most highly the deepest tragedies were then interested in a tournament exactly in proportion to the danger incurred by the champions engaged.

Having intimated their more pacific purpose, the champions retreated to the extremity of the lists, where they remained drawn up in a line; while the challengers, sallying each from his pavilion, mounted their horses, and, headed by Brian de Bois-Guilbert, descended from the platform and opposed themselves individually to the knights who had touched their respective shields.

At the flourish of clarions and trumpets, they started out against each other at full gallop; and such was the superior dexterity or good fortune of the challengers, that those opposed to Bois-Guilbert, Malvoisin, and Front-de Bœuf rolled on the ground. The antagonist of Grantmesnil, instead of bearing his lance-point fair against the crest or the shield of his enemy, swerved so much from the direct line as to break the weapon athwart the person of his opponent — a circumstance which was accounted more disgraceful than that of being actually unhorsed, because the latter might happen from accident, whereas the former evinced awkwardness and want of management of the weapon and of the horse. The fifth knight alone maintained the honour of his party, and parted fairly with the Knight of St. John both splintering their lances without advantage on either side.

The shouts of the multitude, together with the acclamations of the heralds and the clangour of the trumpets, announced the triumph of the victors and the defeat of the

vanquished. The former retreated to their pavilions, and the latter, gathering themselves up as they could, withdrew from the lists in disgrace and dejection, to agree with their victors concerning the redemption of their arms and their horses, which, according to the laws of the tournament, they had forfeited. The fifth of their number alone tarried in the lists long enough to be greeted by the applauses of the spectators, amongst whom he retreated, to the aggravation, doubtless, of his companions' mortification.

A second and a third party of knights took the field; and although they had various success, yet, upon the whole, the advantage decidedly remained with the challengers, not one of whom lost his seat or swerved from his charge — misfortunes which befell one or two of their antagonists in each encounter. The spirits, therefore, of those opposed to them seemed to be considerably damped by their continued success. Three knights only appeared on the fourth entry, who, avoiding the shields of Bois-Guilbert and Front-de-Bœuf, contented themselves with touching those of the three other knights who had not altogether manifested the same strength and dexterity. This politic selection did not alter the fortune of the field: the challengers were still successful. One of their antagonists was overthrown; and both the others failed in the *attaint*,¹ that is, in striking the helmet and shield of their antagonist firmly and strongly, with the lance held in a direct line, so that the weapon might break unless the champion was overthrown.

After this fourth encounter, there was a considerable pause; nor did it appear that any one was very desirous of renewing the contest. The spectators murmured among themselves; for, among the challengers, Malvoisin and Front-de-Bœuf were unpopular from their characters, and the others, except Grantmesnil, were disliked as strangers and foreigners.

But none shared the general feeling of dissatisfaction so keenly as Cedric the Saxon, who saw, in each advantage gained by the Norman challengers, a repeated triumph over the honour of England. His own education had taught him no skill in the games of chivalry, although, with the arms of his Saxon ancestors, he had manifested himself, on many occasions, a brave and determined soldier. He looked anxiously to Athelstane, who had learned the accomplishments of the age, as if

¹ This term of chivalry transferred to the law gives the phrase of being attainted of treason.

desiring that he should make some personal effort to recover the victory which was passing into the hands of the Templar and his associates. But, though both stout of heart and strong of person, Athelstane had a disposition too inert and unambitious to make the exertions which Cedric seemed to expect from him.

'The day is against England, my lord,' said Cedric, in a marked tone; 'are you not tempted to take the lance?'

'I shall tilt to-morrow,' answered Athelstane, 'in the *mêlée*; it is not worth while for me to arm myself to-day.'

Two things displeased Cedric in this speech. It contained the Norman word *mêlée* (to express the general conflict), and it evinced some indifference to the honour of the country; but it was spoken by Athelstane, whom he held in such profound respect that he would not trust himself to canvass his motives or his foibles. Moreover, he had no time to make any remark, for Wamba thrust in his word, observing, 'It was better, though scarce easier, to be the best man among a hundred than the best man of two.'

Athelstane took the observation as a serious compliment; but Cedric, who better understood the Jester's meaning, darted at him a severe and menacing look; and lucky it was for Wamba, perhaps, that the time and place prevented his receiving, notwithstanding his place and service, more sensible marks of his master's resentment.

The pause in the tournament was still uninterrupted, excepting by the voices of the heralds exclaiming — 'Love of ladies, splintering of lances! stand forth, gallant knights, fair eyes look upon your deeds!'

The music also of the challengers breathed from time to time wild bursts expressive of triumph or defiance, while the clowns grudged a holiday which seemed to pass away in inactivity; and old knights and nobles lamented in whispers the decay of martial spirit, spoke of the triumphs of their younger days, but agreed that the land did not now supply dames of such transcendent beauty as had animated the jousts of former times. Prince John began to talk to his attendants about making ready the banquet, and the necessity of adjudging the prize to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had, with a single spear, overthrown two knights and foiled a third.

At length, as the Saracenic music of the challengers concluded one of those long and high flourishes with which they had broken the silence of the lists, it was answered by a

solitary trumpet, which breathed a note of defiance from the northern extremity. All eyes were turned to see the new champion which these sounds announced, and no sooner were the barriers opened than he paced into the lists. As far as could be judged of a man sheathed in armour, the new adventurer did not greatly exceed the middle size, and seemed to be rather slender than strongly made. His suit of armour was formed of steel, richly inlaid with gold, and the device on his shield was a young oak-tree pulled up by the roots, with the Spanish word *Desdichado*, signifying Disinherited. He was mounted on a gallant black horse, and as he passed through the lists he gracefully saluted the Prince and the ladies by lowering his lance. The dexterity with which he managed his steed, and something of youthful grace which he displayed in his manner, won him the favour of the multitude, which some of the lower classes expressed by calling out, 'Touch Ralph de Vipont's shield—touch the Hospitaller's shield; he has the least sure seat, he is your cheapest bargain.'

The champion, moving onward amid these well-meant hints, ascended the platform by the sloping alley which led to it from the lists, and, to the astonishment of all present, riding straight up to the central pavilion, struck with the sharp end of his spear the shield of Brian de Bois-Guilbert until it rang again. All stood astonished at his presumption, but none more than the redoubted Knight whom he had thus defied to mortal combat, and who, little expecting so rude a challenge, was standing carelessly at the door of the pavilion.

'Have you confessed yourself, brother,' said the Templar, 'and have you heard mass this morning, that you peril your life so frankly?'

'I am fitter to meet death than thou art,' answered the Disinherited Knight; for by this name the stranger had recorded himself in the books of the tourney.

'Then take your place in the lists,' said Bois-Guilbert, 'and look your last upon the sun; for this night thou shalt sleep in paradise.'

'Gramercy for thy courtesy,' replied the Disinherited Knight, 'and to requite it, I advise thee to take a fresh horse and a new lance, for by my honour you will need both.'

Having expressed himself thus confidently, he reined his horse backward down the slope which he had ascended, and compelled him in the same manner to move backward through the lists, till he reached the northern extremity, where he

remained stationary, in expectation of his antagonist. This feat of horsemanship again attracted the applause of the multitude.

However incensed at his adversary for the precautions which he recommended, Brian de Bois-Guilbert did not neglect his advice; for his honour was too nearly concerned to permit his neglecting any means which might ensure victory over his presumptuous opponent. He changed his horse for a proved and fresh one of great strength and spirit. He chose a new and a tough spear, lest the wood of the former might have been strained in the previous encounters he had sustained. Lastly, he laid aside his shield, which had received some little damage, and received another from his squires. His first had only borne the general device of his rider, representing two knights riding upon one horse, an emblem expressive of the original humility and poverty of the Templars, qualities which they had since exchanged for the arrogance and wealth that finally occasioned their suppression. Bois-Guilbert's new shield bore a raven in full flight, holding in its claws a skull, and bearing the motto, *Gare le Corbeau*.

When the two champions stood opposed to each other at the two extremities of the lists, the public expectation was strained to the highest pitch. Few augured the possibility that the encounter could terminate well for the Disinherited Knight; yet his courage and gallantry secured the general good wishes of the spectators.

The trumpets had no sooner given the signal, than the champions vanished from their posts with the speed of lightning, and closed in the centre of the lists with the shock of a thunder-bolt. The lances burst into shivers up to the very grasp, and it seemed at the moment that both knights had fallen, for the shock had made each horse recoil backwards upon its haunches. The address of the riders recovered their steeds by use of the bridle and spur; and having glared on each other for an instant with eyes which seemed to flash fire through the bars of their visors, each made a demi-volt, and, retiring to the extremity of the lists, received a fresh lance from the attendants.

A loud shout from the spectators, waving of scarfs and handkerchiefs, and general acclamations, attested the interest taken by the spectators in this encounter—the most equal, as well as the best performed, which had graced the day. But no sooner had the knights resumed their station than the clamour of applause was hushed into a silence so deep and so

dead that it seemed the multitude were afraid even to breathe.

A few minutes' pause having been allowed, that the combatants and their horses might recover breath, Prince John with his truncheon signed to the trumpets to sound the onset. The champions a second time sprung from their stations, and closed in the centre of the lists, with the same speed, the same dexterity, the same violence, but not the same equal fortune as before.

In this second encounter, the Templar aimed at the centre of his antagonist's shield, and struck it so fair and forcibly that his spear went to shivers, and the Disinherited Knight reeled in his saddle. On the other hand, that champion had, in the beginning of his career, directed the point of his lance towards Bois-Guilbert's shield, but, changing his aim almost in the moment of encounter, he addressed it to the helmet, a mark more difficult to hit, but which, if attained, rendered the shock more irresistible. Fair and true he hit the Norman on the visor, where his lance's point kept hold of the bars. Yet, even at this disadvantage, the Templar sustained his high reputation; and had not the girths of his saddle burst, he might not have been unhorsed. As it chanced, however, saddle, horse, and man rolled on the ground under a cloud of dust.

To extricate himself from the stirrups and fallen steed was to the Templar scarce the work of a moment; and, stung with madness, both at his disgrace and at the acclamations with which it was hailed by the spectators, he drew his sword and waved it in defiance of his conqueror. The Disinherited Knight sprung from his steed, and also unsheathed his sword. The marshals of the field, however, spurred their horses between them, and reminded them that the laws of the tournament did not, on the present occasion, permit this species of encounter.

'We shall meet again, I trust,' said the Templar, casting a resentful glance at his antagonist; 'and where there are none to separate us.'

'If we do not,' said the Disinherited Knight, 'the fault shall not be mine. On foot or horseback, with spear, with axe, or with sword, I am alike ready to encounter thee.'

More and angrier words would have been exchanged, but the marshals, crossing their lances betwixt them, compelled them to separate. The Disinherited Knight returned to his first station, and Bois-Guilbert to his tent, where he remained for the rest of the day in an agony of despair.

Without alighting from his horse, the conqueror called for a bowl of wine, and opening the beaver, or lower part of his helmet, announced that he quaffed it, 'To all true English hearts, and to the confusion of foreign tyrants.' He then commanded his trumpet to sound a defiance to the challengers, and desired a herald to announce to them that he should make no election, but was willing to encounter them in the order in which they pleased to advance against him.

The gigantic Front-de-Bœuf, armed in sable armour, was the first who took the field. He bore on a white shield a black bull's head, half defaced by the numerous encounters which he had undergone, and bearing the arrogant motto, *Cave, Adsum*. Over this champion the Disinherited Knight obtained a slight but decisive advantage. Both Knights broke their lances fairly, but Front-de-Bœuf, who lost a stirrup in the encounter, was adjudged to have the disadvantage.

In the stranger's third encounter with Sir Philip Malvoisin he was equally successful; striking that baron so forcibly on the casque that the laces of the helmet broke, and Malvoisin, only saved from falling by being unhelmeted, was declared vanquished like his companions.

In his fourth combat with De Grantmesnil the Disinherited Knight showed as much courtesy as he had hitherto evinced courage and dexterity. De Grantmesnil's horse, which was young and violent, reared and plunged in the course of the career so as to disturb the rider's aim, and the stranger, declining to take the advantage which this accident afforded him, raised his lance, and passing his antagonist without touching him, wheeled his horse and rode back again to his own end of the lists, offering his antagonist, by a herald, the chance of a second encounter. This De Grantmesnil declined, avowing himself vanquished as much by the courtesy as by the address of his opponent.

Ralph de Vipont summed up the list of the stranger's triumphs, being hurled to the ground with such force that the blood gushed from his nose and his mouth, and he was borne senseless from the lists.

The acclamations of thousands applauded the unanimous award of the Prince and marshals, announcing that day's honours to the Disinherited Knight.

CHAPTER IX

In the midst was seen
A lady of a more majestic mien,
By stature and by beauty mark'd their sovereign Queen.

And as in beauty she surpass'd the choir,
So nobler than the rest was her attire ;
A crown of ruddy gold inclosed her brow,
Plain without pomp, and rich without a show ;
A branch of Agnus Castus in her hand,
She bore aloft her symbol of command.

The Flower and the Leaf.

WILLIAM DE WYVIL and Stephen de Martival, the marshals of the field, were the first to offer their congratulations to the victor, praying him, at the same time, to suffer his helmet to be unlaced, or, at least, that he would raise his visor ere he conducted him to receive the prize of the day's tourney from the hands of Prince John. The Disinherited Knight, with all knightly courtesy declined their request, alleging, that he could not suffer his face to be seen, for reasons which he communicated to the heralds when he entered the lists. The marshals were perfectly satisfied by this reply ; for amidst the frequent and capricious vows by which knights were accustomed to bind themselves in the days of chivalry, there were none more common than those by which they engaged to remain incognito for a certain space, or until some particular adventure was achieved. The marshals, therefore, pressed no farther into the mystery of the Disinherited Knight, but, announcing to Prince John the conqueror's desire to remain unknown, they requested permission to bring him before his Grace, in order that he might receive the reward of his valour.

John's curiosity was excited by the mystery observed by the stranger ; and, being already displeased with the issue of the tournament, in which the challengers whom he favoured had been successfully defeated by one knight, he answered haughtily

to the marshals, 'By the light of Our Lady's brow, this same knight hath been disinherited as well of his courtesy as of his lands, since he desires to appear before us without uncovering his face. Wot ye, my lords,' he said, turning round to his train, 'who this gallant can be that bears himself thus proudly!'

'I cannot guess,' answered De Bracy, 'nor did I think there had been within the four seas that girth Britain a champion that could bear down these five knights in one day's jousting. By my faith, I shall never forget the force with which he shocked De Vipont. The poor Hospitaller was hurled from his saddle like a stone from a sling.'

'Boast not of that,' said a Knight of St. John who was present; 'your Temple champion had no better luck. I saw your brave lance, Bois-Guilbert, roll thrice over, grasping his hands full of sand at every turn.'

De Bracy, being attached to the Templars, would have replied but was prevented by Prince John. 'Silence, sirs!' he said; 'what unprofitable debate have we here?'

'The victor,' said De Wyvil, 'still waits the pleasure of your Highness.'

'It is our pleasure,' answered John, 'that he do so wait until we learn whether there is not some one who can at least guess at his name and quality. Should he remain there till nightfall, he has had work enough to keep him warm.'

'Your Grace,' said Waldemar Fitzurse, 'will do less than due honour to the victor if you compel him to wait till we tell your Highness that which we cannot know; at least I can form no guess—unless he be one of the good lances who accompanied King Richard to Palestine, and who are now straggling homeward from the Holy Land.'

'It may be the Earl of Salisbury,' said De Bracy; 'he is about the same pitch.'

'Sir Thomas de Multon, the Knight of Gilsland, rather,' said Fitzurse; 'Salisbury is bigger in the bones.' A whisper arose among the train, but by whom first suggested could not be ascertained. 'It might be the King—it might be Richard Cœur-de-Lion himself!'

'Over God's forbode!' said Prince John, involuntarily turning at the same time as pale as death, and shrinking as if blighted by a flash of lightning; 'Waldemar! De Bracy! brave knights and gentlemen, remember your promises, and stand truly by me!'

'Here is no danger impending,' said Waldemar Fitzurse; 'are you so little acquainted with the gigantic limbs of your father's son, as to think they can be held within the circumference of yonder suit of armour? De Wyvil and Martival, you will best serve the Prince by bringing forward the victor to the throne, and ending an error that has conjured all the blood from his cheeks. Look at him more closely,' he continued; 'your Highness will see that he wants three inches of King Richard's height, and twice as much of his shoulder-breadth. The very horse he backs could not have carried the ponderous weight of King Richard through a single course.'

While he was yet speaking, the marshals brought forward the Disinherited Knight to the foot of a wooden flight of steps, which formed the ascent from the lists to Prince John's throne. Still discomposed with the idea that his brother, so much injured, and to whom he was so much indebted, had suddenly arrived in his native kingdom, even the distinctions pointed out by Fitzurse did not altogether remove the Prince's apprehensions; and while, with a short and embarrassed eulogy upon his valour, he caused to be delivered to him the war-horse assigned as the prize, he trembled lest from the barred visor of the mailed form before him an answer might be returned in the deep and awful accents of Richard the Lion-hearted.

But the Disinherited Knight spoke not a word in reply to the compliment of the Prince, which he only acknowledged with a profound obeisance.

The horse was led into the lists by two grooms richly dressed, the animal itself being fully accoutred with the richest war-furniture; which, however, scarcely added to the value of the noble creature in the eyes of those who were judges. Laying one hand upon the pommel of the saddle, the Disinherited Knight vaulted at once upon the back of the steed without making use of the stirrup, and, brandishing aloft his lance, rode twice around the lists, exhibiting the points and paces of the horse with the skill of a perfect horseman.

The appearance of vanity which might otherwise have been attributed to this display was removed by the propriety shown in exhibiting to the best advantage the princely reward with which he had been just honoured, and the Knight was again greeted by the acclamations of all present.

In the meanwhile, the bustling Prior of Jorvaulx had reminded Prince John, in a whisper, that the victor must now display his good judgment, instead of his valour, by selecting

from among the beauties who graced the galleries a lady who should fill the throne of the Queen of Beauty and of Love, and deliver the prize of the tourney, upon the ensuing day. The Prince accordingly made a sign with his truncheon as the Knight passed him in his second career around the lists. The Knight turned towards the throne, and, sinking his lance until the point was within a foot of the ground, remained motionless, as if expecting John's commands; while all admired the sudden dexterity with which he instantly reduced his fiery steed from a state of violent emotion and high excitement to the stillness of an equestrian statue.

'Sir Disinherited Knight,' said Prince John, 'since that is the only title by which we can address you, it is now your duty, as well as privilege, to name the fair lady who, as Queen of Honour and of Love, is to preside over next day's festival. If, as a stranger in our land, you should require the aid of other judgment to guide your own, we can only say that Alicia, the daughter of our gallant knight Waldemar Fitzurse, has at our court been long held the first in beauty as in place. Nevertheless, it is your undoubted prerogative to confer on whom you please this crown, by the delivery of which to the lady of your choice the election of to-morrow's Queen will be formal and complete. Raise your lance.'

The Knight obeyed; and Prince John placed upon its point a coronet of green satin, having around its edge a circlet of gold, the upper edge of which was relieved by arrow-points and hearts placed interchangeably, like the strawberry leaves and balls upon a ducal crown.

In the broad hint which he dropped respecting the daughter of Waldemar Fitzurse, John had more than one motive, each the offspring of a mind which was a strange mixture of carelessness and presumption with low artifice and cunning. He wished to banish from the minds of the chivalry around him his own indecent and unacceptable jest respecting the Jewess Rebecca; he was desirous of conciliating Alicia's father, Waldemar, of whom he stood in awe, and who had more than once shown himself dissatisfied during the course of the day's proceedings. He had also a wish to establish himself in the good graces of the lady; for John was at least as licentious in his pleasures as profligate in his ambition. But besides all these reasons, he was desirous to raise up against the Disinherited Knight, towards whom he already entertained a strong dislike, a powerful enemy in the person of Waldemar Fitzurse,

who was likely, he thought, highly to resent the injury done to his daughter in case, as was not unlikely, the victor should make another choice.

And so indeed it proved. *For the Disinherited Knight passed the gallery, close to that of the Prince, in which the Lady Alicia was seated in the full pride of triumphant beauty, and pacing forwards as slowly as he had hitherto rode swiftly around the lists, he seemed to exercise his right of examining the numerous fair faces which adorned that splendid circle.

It was worth while to see the different conduct of the beauties who underwent this examination, during the time it was proceeding. Some blushed ; some assumed an air of pride and dignity ; some looked straight forward, and essayed to seem utterly unconscious of what was going on ; some drew back in alarm, which was perhaps affected ; some endeavoured to forbear smiling ; and there were two or three who laughed outright. There were also some who dropped their veils over their charms ; but as the Wardour Manuscript says these were fair ones of ten years' standing, it may be supposed that, having had their full share of such vanities, they were willing to withdraw their claim in order to give a fair chance to the rising beauties of the age.

At length the champion paused beneath the balcony in which the Lady Rowena was placed, and the expectation of the spectators was excited to the utmost.

It must be owned that, if an interest displayed in his success could have bribed the Disinherited Knight, the part of the lists before which he paused had merited his predilection. Cedric the Saxon, overjoyed at the discomfiture of the Templar, and still more so at the miscarriage of his two malevolent neighbours, Front-de-Bœuf and Malvoisin, had, with his body half-stretched over the balcony, accompanied the victor in each course not with his eyes only, but with his whole heart and soul. The Lady Rowena had watched the progress of the day with equal attention, though without openly betraying the same intense interest. Even the unmoved Athelstane had shown symptoms of shaking off his apathy, when, calling for a huge goblet of muscadine, he quaffed it to the health of the Disinherited Knight.

Another group, stationed under the gallery occupied by the Saxons, had shown no less interest in the fate of the day.

'Father Abraham !' said Isaac of York, when the first course was run betwixt the Templar and the Disinherited Knight.

'how fiercely that Gentile rides! Ah, the good horse that was brought all the long way from Barbary he takes no more care of him than if he were a wild ass's colt; and the noble armour that was worth so many zecchins to Joseph Pareim, the armourer of Milan, besides seventy in the hundred of profits, he cares for it as little as if he had found it in the highways!'

'If he risks his own person and limbs, father,' said Rebecca, 'in doing such a dreadful battle, he can scarce be expected to spare his horse and armour.'

'Child!' replied Isaac, somewhat heated, 'thou knowest not what thou speakest. His neck and limbs are his own; but his horse and armour belong to —— Holy Jacob! what was I about to say! Nevertheless, it is a good youth. See, Rebecca! — see, he is again about to go up to battle against the Philistine! Pray, child — pray for the safety of the good youth; and of the speedy horse and the rich armour. God of my fathers!' he again exclaimed, 'he hath conquered, and the uncircumcised Philistine hath fallen before his lance, even as Og the King of Bashan, and Sihon, King of the Amorites, fell before the sword of our fathers! Surely he shall take their gold and their silver, and their war-horses, and their armour of brass and of steel, for a prey and for a spoil.'

The same anxiety did the worthy Jew display during every course that was run, seldom failing to hazard a hasty calculation concerning the value of the horse and armour which were forfeited to the champion upon each new success. There had been therefore no small interest taken in the success of the Disinherited Knight by those who occupied the part of the lists before which he now paused.

Whether from indecision or some other motive of hesitation, the champion of the day remained stationary for more than a minute, while the eyes of the silent audience were riveted upon his motions; and then, gradually and gracefully sinking the point of his lance, he deposited the coronet which it supported at the feet of the fair Rowena. The trumpets instantly sounded, while the heralds proclaimed the Lady Rowena the Queen of Beauty and of Love for the ensuing day, menacing with suitable penalties those who should be disobedient to her authority. They then repeated their cry of 'Largesse,' to which Cedric, in the height of his joy, replied by an ample donative, and to which Athelstane, though less promptly, added one equally large.

There was some murmuring among the damsels of Norman descent, who were as much unused to see the preference given to a Saxon beauty as the Norman nobles were to sustain defeat in the games of chivalry which they themselves had introduced. But these sounds of disaffection were drowned by the popular shout of 'Long live the Lady Rowena, the chosen and lawful Queen of Love and of Beauty!' To which many in the lower area added, 'Long live the Saxon Princess! long live the race of the immortal Alfred.'

However unacceptable those sounds might be to Prince John and to those around him, he saw himself nevertheless obliged to confirm the nomination of the victor, and accordingly calling to horse, he left his throne, and mounting his jennet, accompanied by his train, he again entered the lists. The Prince paused a moment beneath the gallery of the Lady Alicia, to whom he paid his compliments, observing, at the same time, to those around him — 'By my halidome, sirs! if the Knight's feats in arms have shown that he hath limbs and sinews, his choice hath no less proved that his eyes are none of the clearest.'

It was on this occasion, as during his whole life, John's misfortune not perfectly to understand the characters of those whom he wished to conciliate. Waldemar Fitzurse was rather offended than pleased at the Prince stating thus broadly an opinion that his daughter had been slighted.

'I know no right of chivalry,' he said, 'more precious or inalienable than that of each free knight to choose his lady-love by his own judgment. My daughter courts distinction from no one; and in her own character, and in her own sphere, will never fail to receive the full proportion of that which is her due.'

Prince John replied not; but, spurring his horse, as if to give vent to his vexation, he made the animal bound forward to the gallery where Rowena was seated, with the crown still at her feet.

'Assume,' he said, 'fair lady, the mark of your sovereignty, to which none vows homage more sincerely than ourself, John of Anjou; and if it please you to-day, with your noble sire and friends, to grace our banquet in the Castle of Ashby, we shall learn to know the empress to whose service we devote to-morrow.'

Rowena remained silent, and Cedric answered for her in his native Saxon.

'The Lady Rowena,' he said, 'possesses not the language in which to reply to your courtesy, or to sustain her part in your festival. I also, and the noble Athelstane of Coningsburgh, speak only the language, and practise only the manners, of our fathers. We therefore decline with thanks your Highness's courteous invitation to the banquet. To-morrow, the Lady Rowena will take upon her the state to which she has been called by the free election of the victor Knight, confirmed by the acclamations of the people.'

So saying, he lifted the coronet and placed it upon Rowena's head, in token of her acceptance of the temporary authority assigned to her.

'What says he?' said Prince John, affecting not to understand the Saxon language, in which, however, he was well skilled. The purport of Cedric's speech was repeated to him in French. 'It is well,' he said; 'to-morrow we will ourself conduct this mute sovereign to her seat of dignity. You, at least, Sir Knight,' he added, turning to the victor, who had remained near the gallery, 'will this day share our banquet?'

The Knight, speaking for the first time, in a low and hurried voice, excused himself by pleading fatigue, and the necessity of preparing for to-morrow's encounter.

'It is well,' said Prince John, haughtily; 'although unused to such refusals, we will endeavour to digest our banquet as we may, though ungraced by the most successful in arms and his elected Queen of Beauty.'

So saying, he prepared to leave the lists with his glittering train, and his turning his steed for that purpose was the signal for the breaking up and dispersion of the spectators.

Yet, with the vindictive memory proper to offended pride, especially when combined with conscious want of desert, John had hardly proceeded three paces ere again, turning around, he fixed an eye of stern resentment upon the yeoman who had displeased him in the early part of the day, and issued his commands to the men-at-arms who stood near — 'On your life, suffer not that fellow to escape.'

The yeoman stood the angry glance of the Prince with the same unvaried steadiness which had marked his former deportment, saying, with a smile, 'I have no intention to leave Ashby until the day after to-morrow. I must see how Staffordshire and Leicestershire can draw their bows; the forests of Needwood and Charnwood must rear good archers.'

'I,' said Prince John to his attendants, but not in direct

reply — 'I will see how he can draw his own ; and woe betide him unless his skill should prove some apology for his insolence !'

'It is full time,' said De Bracy, 'that the *outracundance*¹ of these peasants should be restrained by some striking example.'

Waldemar Fitzurse, who probably thought his patron was not taking the readiest road to popularity, shrugged up his shoulders and was silent. Prince John resumed his retreat from the lists, and the dispersion of the multitude became general.

In various routes, according to the different quarters from which they came, and in groups of various numbers, the spectators were seen retiring over the plain. By far the most numerous part streamed towards the town of Ashby, where many of the distinguished persons were lodged in the castle, and where others found accommodation in the town itself. Among these were most of the knights who had already appeared in the tournament, or who proposed to fight there the ensuing day, and who, as they rode slowly along, talking over the events of the day, were greeted with loud shouts by the populace. The same acclamations were bestowed upon Prince John, although he was indebted for them rather to the splendour of his appearance and train than to the popularity of his character.

A more sincere and more general, as well as a better-merited acclamation, attended the victor of the day, until, anxious to withdraw himself from popular notice, he accepted the accommodation of one of those pavilions pitched at the extremities of the lists, the use of which was courteously tendered him by the marshals of the field. On his retiring to his tent, many who had lingered in the lists, to look upon and form conjectures concerning him, also dispersed.

The signs and sounds of a tumultuous concourse of men lately crowded together in one place, and agitated by the same passing events, were now exchanged for the distant hum of voices of different groups retreating in all directions, and these speedily died away in silence. No other sounds were heard save the voices of the menials who stripped the galleries of their cushions and tapestry, in order to put them in safety for the night, and wrangled among themselves for the half-used bottles of wine and relics of the refreshment which had been served round to the spectators.

¹ Presumption, insolence.

Beyond the precincts of the lists more than one forge was erected ; and these now began to glimmer through the twilight, announcing the toil of the armourers, which was to continue through the whole night, in order to repair or alter the suits of armour to be used again on the morrow.

A strong guard of men-at-arms, renewed at intervals, from two hours to two hours, surrounded the lists, and kept watch during the night.

CHAPTER X

Thus, like the sad presaging raven, that tolls
The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,
And in the shadow of the silent night
Doth shake contagion from her sable wings;
Vex'd and tormented, runs poor Barabbas,
With fatal curses towards these Christians.

Jew of Malta.

THE Disinherited Knight had no sooner reached his pavilion than squires and pages in abundance tendered their services to disarm him, to bring fresh attire, and to offer him the refreshment of the bath. Their zeal on this occasion was perhaps sharpened by curiosity, since every one desired to know who the knight was that had gained so many laurels, yet had refused, even at the command of Prince John, to lift his visor or to name his name. But their officious inquisitiveness was not gratified. The Disinherited Knight refused all other assistance save that of his own squire, or rather yeoman — a clownish-looking man, who, wrapt in a cloak of dark-coloured felt, and having his head and face half-buried in a Norman bonnet made of black fur, seemed to affect the incognito as much as his master. All others being excluded from the tent, this attendant relieved his master from the more burdensome parts of his armour, and placed food and wine before him, which the exertions of the day rendered very acceptable.

The Knight had scarcely finished a hasty meal ere his menial announced to him that five men, each bearing a barbed steed, desired to speak with him. The Disinherited Knight had exchanged his armour for the long robe usually worn by those of his condition, which, being furnished with a hood, concealed the features, when such was the pleasure of the wearer, almost as completely as the visor of the helmet itself; but the twilight, which was now fast darkening, would of itself have rendered a disguise unnecessary, unless to persons to

whom the face of an individual chanced to be particularly well known.

The Disinherited Knight, therefore, stepped boldly forth to the front of his tent, and found in attendance the squires of the challengers, whom he easily knew by their russet and black dresses, each of whom led his master's charger, loaded with the armour in which he had that day fought.

'According to the laws of chivalry,' said the foremost of these men, 'I, Baldwin de Oyley, squire to the redoubted Knight Brian de Bois-Guilbert, make offer to you, styling yourself for the present the Disinherited Knight, of the horse and armour used by the said Brian de Bois-Guilbert in this day's passage of arms, leaving it with your nobleness to retain or to ransom the same, according to your pleasure; for such is the law of arms.'

The other squires repeated nearly the same formula, and then stood to await the decision of the Disinherited Knight.

'To you four, sirs,' replied the Knight, addressing those who had last spoken, 'and to your honourable and valiant masters, I have one common reply. Commend me to the noble knights, your masters, and say, I should do ill to deprive them of steeds and arms which can never be used by braver cavaliers. I would I could here end my message to these gallant knights; but being, as I term myself, in truth and earnest the Disinherited, I must be thus far bound to your masters, that they will, of their courtesy, be please' to ransom their steeds and armour, since that which I wear I can hardly term mine own.'

'We stand commissioned, each of us,' answered the squire of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, 'to offer a hundred zecchins in ransom of these horses and suits of armour.'

'It is sufficient,' said the Disinherited Knight. 'Half the sum my present necessities compel me to accept; of the remaining half, distribute one moiety among yourselves, sir squires, and divide the other half betwixt the heralds and the pursuivants, and minstrels, and attendants.'

The squires, with cap in hand, and low reverences, expressed their deep sense of a courtesy and generosity not often practised, at least upon a scale so extensive. The Disinherited Knight then addressed his discourse to Baldwin, the squire of Brian de Bois-Guilbert. 'From your master,' said he. 'I will accept neither arms nor ransom. Say to him in my name, that our strife is not ended — no, not till we have fought as well

with swords as with lances, as well on foot as on horseback. To this mortal quarrel he has himself defied me, and I shall not forget the challenge. Meantime, let him be assured that I hold him not as one of his companions, with whom I can with pleasure exchange courtesies; but rather as one with whom I stand upon terms of mortal defiance.'

'My master,' answered Baldwin, 'knows how to requite scorn with scorn, and blows with blows, as well as courtesy with courtesy. Since you disdain to accept from him any share of the ransom at which you have rated the arms of the other knights, I must leave his armour and his horse here, being well assured that he will never deign to mount the one or wear the other.'

'You have spoken well, good squire,' said the Disinherited Knight — 'well and boldly, as it beseemeth him to speak who answers for an absent master. Leave not, however, the horse and armour here. Restore them to thy master; or, if he scorns to accept them, retain them, good friend, for thine own use. So far as they are mine, I bestow them upon you freely.'

Baldwin made a deep obeisance, and retired with his companions; and the Disinherited Knight entered the pavilion.

'Thus far, Gurth,' said he, addressing his attendant, 'the reputation of English chivalry hath not suffered in my hands.'

'And I,' said Gurth, 'for a Saxon swineherd, have not ill played the personage of a Norman squire-at-arms.'

'Yea, but,' answered the Disinherited Knight, 'thou hast ever kept me in anxiety lest thy clownish bearing should discover thee.'

'Tush!' said Gurth, 'I fear discovery from none, saving my playfellow, Wamba the Jester, of whom I could never discover whether he were most knave or fool. Yet I could scarce choose but laugh, when my old master passed so near to me, dreaming all the while that Gurth was keeping his porkers many a mile off, in the thickets and swamps of Rotherwood. If I am discovered —'

'Enough,' said the Disinherited Knight, 'thou knowest my promise.'

'Nay, for that matter,' said Gurth, 'I will never fail my friend for fear of my skin-cutting. I have a tough hide, that will bear knife or scourge as well as any boar's hide in my herd.'

'Trust me, I will requite the risk you run for my love,

Gurth,' said the Knight. 'Meanwhile, I pray you to accept these ten pieces of gold.'

'I am richer,' said Gurth, putting them into his pouch, 'than ever was swineherd or bondsman.'

'Take this bag of gold to Ashby,' continued his master, 'and find out Isaac the Jew of York, and let him pay himself for the horse and arms with which his credit supplied me.'

'Nay, by St. Dunstan,' replied Gurth, 'that I will not do.'

'How, knave,' replied his master, 'wilt thou not obey my commands?'

'So they be honest, reasonable, and Christian commands,' replied Gurth; 'but this is none of these. To suffer the Jew to pay himself would be dishonest, for it would be cheating my master; and unreasonable, for it were the part of a fool; and unchristian, since it would be plundering a believer to enrich an infidel.'

'See him contented, however, thou stubborn varlet,' said the Disinherited Knight.

'I will do so,' said Gurth, taking the bag under his cloak and leaving the apartment; 'and it will go hard,' he muttered, 'but I content him with one-half of his own asking.' So saying, he departed, and left the Disinherited Knight to his own perplexed ruminations, which, upon more accounts than it is now possible to communicate to the reader, were of a nature peculiarly agitating and painful.

We must now change the scene to the village of Ashby, or rather to a country house in its vicinity belonging to a wealthy Israelite, with whom Isaac, his daughter, and retinue had taken up their quarters; the Jews, it is well known, being as liberal in exercising the duties of hospitality and charity among their own people as they were alleged to be reluctant and churlish in extending them to those whom they termed Gentiles, and whose treatment of them certainly merited little hospitality at their hand.

In an apartment, small indeed, but richly furnished with decorations of an Oriental taste, Rebecca was seated on a heap of embroidered cushions, which, piled along a low platform that surrounded the chamber, served, like the *estrada* of the Spaniards, instead of chairs and stools. She was watching the motions of her father with a look of anxious and filial affection, while he paced the apartment with a dejected mien and disordered step, sometimes clasping his hands together, sometimes casting his eyes to the roof of the apartment, as one who

laboured under great mental tribulation. 'O, Jacob!' he exclaimed — 'O, all ye twelve Holy Fathers of our tribe! what a losing venture is this for one who hath duly kept every jot and tittle of the law of Moses! Fifty zecchins wrenched from me at one clutch, and by the talons of a tyrant!'

'But, father,' said Rebecca, 'you seemed to give the gold to Prince John willingly.'

'Willingly! the blotch of Egypt upon him! Willingly, saidst thou? Ay, as willingly as when, in the Gulf of Lyons, I flung over my merchandise to lighten the ship, while she laboured in the tempest — robbed the seething billows in my choice silks — perfumed their briny foam with myrrh and aloes — enriched their caverns with gold and silver work! And was not that an hour of unutterable misery, though my own hands made the sacrifice?'

'But it was a sacrifice which Heaven exacted to save our lives,' answered Rebecca, 'and the God of our fathers has since blessed your store and your gettings.'

'Ay,' answered Isaac, 'but if the tyrant lays hold on them as he did to-day, and compels me to smile while he is robbing me? O, daughter, disinherited and wandering as we are, the worst evil which befalls our race is, that when we are wronged and plundered all the world laughs around, and we are compelled to suppress our sense of injury, and to smile tamely when we would revenge bravely.'

'Think not thus of it, my father,' said Rebecca; 'we also have advantages. These Gentiles, cruel and oppressive as they are, are in some sort dependent on the dispersed children of Zion, whom they despise and persecute. Without the aid of our wealth they could neither furnish forth their hosts in war nor their triumphs in peace; and the gold which we lend them returns with increase to our coffers. We are like the herb which flourisheth most when it is most trampled on. Even this day's pageant had not proceeded without the consent of the despised Jew, who furnished the means.'

'Daughter,' said Isaac, 'thou hast harped upon another string of sorrow. The goodly steed and the rich armour, equal to the full profit of my adventure with our Kirjath Jairam of Leicester — there is a dead loss too — ay, a loss which swallows up the gains of a week — ay, of the space between two Sabbaths — and yet it may end better than I now think, for 't is a good youth.'

'Assuredly,' said Rebecca, 'you shall not repent you of requiring the good deed received of the stranger knight.'

'I trust so, daughter,' said Isaac, 'and I trust too in the rebuilding of Zion ; but as well do I hope with my own bodily eyes to see the walls and battlements of the new Temple, as to see a Christian, yea, the very best of Christians, repay a debt to a Jew, unless under the awe of the judge and jailor.'

So saying, he resumed his discontented walk through the apartment ; and Rebecca, perceiving that her attempts at consolation only served to awaken new subjects of complaint, wisely desisted from her unavailing efforts — a prudential line of conduct, and we recommend to all who set up for comforters and advisers to follow it in the like circumstances.

The evening was now becoming dark, when a Jewish servant entered the apartment and placed upon the table two silver lamps, fed with perfumed oil ; the richest wines and the most delicate refreshments were at the same time displayed by another Israelitish domestic on a small ebony table, inlaid with silver ; for, in the interior of their houses, the Jews refused themselves no expensive indulgences. At the same time the servant informed Isaac that a Nazarene (so they termed Christians while conversing among themselves) desired to speak with him. He that would live by traffic must hold himself at the disposal of every one claiming business with him. Isaac at once replaced on the table the untasted glass of Greek wine which he had just raised to his lips, and saying hastily to his daughter, 'Rebecca, veil thyself,' commanded the stranger to be admitted.

Just as Rebecca had dropped over her fine features a screen of silver gauze which reached to her feet, the door opened, and Gurth entered, wrapt in the ample folds of his Norman mantle. His appearance was rather suspicious than prepossessing, especially as, instead of doffing his bonnet, he pulled it still deeper over his rugged brow.

'Art thou Isaac the Jew of York ?' said Gurth, in Saxon.

'I am,' replied Isaac, in the same language, for his traffic had rendered every tongue spoken in Britain familiar to him, 'and who art thou ?'

'That is not to the purpose,' answered Gurth.

'As much as my name is to thee,' replied Isaac ; 'for without knowing thine, how can I hold intercourse with thee ?'

'Easily,' answered Gurth ; 'I, being to pay money, must know that I deliver it to the right person ; thou, who art to receive it, wilt not, I think, care very greatly by whose hands it is delivered.'

'O,' said the Jew, 'you are come to pay monies? Holy Father Abraham! that altereth our relation to each other. And from whom dost thou bring it?'

'From the Disinherited Knight,' said Gurth, 'victor in this day's tournament. It is the price of the armour supplied to him by Kirjath Jairam of Leicester, on thy recommendation. The steed is restored to thy stable. I desire to know the amount of the sum which I am to pay for the armour.'

'I said he was a good youth!' exclaimed Isaac, with joyful exultation. 'A cup of wine will do thee no harm,' he added, filling and handing to the swineherd a richer draught than Gurth had ever before tasted. 'And how much money,' continued Isaac, 'hast thou brought with thee?'

'Holy Virgin!' said Gurth, setting down the cup, 'what nectar these unbelieving dogs drink, while true Christians are fain to quaff ale as muddy and thick as the draff we give to hogs! What money have I brought with me?' continued the Saxon, when he had finished this uncivil ejaculation, 'even but a small sum; something in hand the whilst. What, Isaac! thou must bear a conscience, though it be a Jewish one.'

'Nay, but,' said Isaac, 'thy master has won goodly steeds and rich armours with the strength of his lance and of his right hand — but 't is a good youth; the Jew will take these in present payment, and render him back the surplus.'

'My master has disposed of them already,' said Gurth.

'Ah! that was wrong,' said the Jew — 'that was the part of a fool. No Christians here could buy so many horses and armour; no Jew except myself would give him half the values. But thou hast a hundred zecchins with thee in that bag,' said Isaac, prying under Gurth's cloak, 'it is a heavy one.'

'I have heads for cross-bow bolts in it,' said Gurth, readily.

'Well, then,' said Isaac, panting and hesitating between habitual love of gain and a new-born desire to be liberal in the present instance, 'if I should say that I would take eighty zecchins for the good steed and rich armour, which leaves me not a guilder's profit, have you money to pay me?'

'Barely,' said Gurth, though the sum demanded was more reasonable than he expected, 'and it will leave my master nigh penniless. Nevertheless, if such be your least offer, I must be content.'

'Fill thyself another goblet of wine,' said the Jew. 'Ah! eighty zecchins is too little. It leaveth no profit for the usages of the monies; and, besides, the good horse may have suffered

wrong in this day's encounter. O, it was a hard and a dangerous meeting! man and steed rushing on each other like wild bulls of Bashan! the horse cannot but have had wrong.'

'And I say,' replied Gurth, 'he is sound, wind and limb; and you may see him now in your stable. And I say, over and above, that seventy zecchins is enough for the armour, and I hope a Christian's word is as good as a Jew's. If you will not take seventy, I will carry this bag (and he shook it till the contents jingled) back to my master.'

'Nay, nay!' said Isaac; 'lay down the talents — the shekels — the eighty zecchins, and thou shalt see I will consider thee liberally.'

Gurth at length complied; and telling out eighty zecchins upon the table, the Jew delivered out to him an acquittance for the horse and suit of armour. The Jew's hand trembled for joy as he wrapped up the first seventy pieces of gold. The last ten he told over with much deliberation, pausing, and saying something as he took each piece from the table and dropped it into his purse. It seemed as if his avarice were struggling with his better nature, and compelling him to pouch zecchin after zecchin, while his generosity urged him to restore some part at least to his benefactor, or as a donation to his agent. His whole speech ran nearly thus:

'Seventy-one, seventy-two — thy master is a good youth — seventy-three — an excellent youth — seventy-four — that piece hath been clipt within the ring — seventy-five — and that looketh light of weight — seventy-six — when thy master wants money, let him come to Isaac of York — seventy-seven — that is, with reasonable security.' Here he made a considerable pause, and Gurth had good hope that the last three pieces might escape the fate of their comrades; but the enumeration proceeded — 'Seventy-eight — thou art a good fellow — seventy-nine — and deservest something for thyself —'

Here the Jew paused again, and looked at the last zecchin, intending, doubtless, to bestow it upon Gurth. He weighed it upon the tip of his finger, and made it ring by dropping it upon the table. Had it rung too flat, or had it felt a hair's breadth too light, generosity had carried the day; but, unhappily for Gurth, the chime was full and true, the zecchin plump, newly coined, and a grain above weight. Isaac could not find in his heart to part with it, so dropt it into his purse as if in absence of mind, with the words, 'Eighty completes the tale, and I trust thy master will reward thee handsomely. Surely,' he

added, looking earnestly at the bag, 'thou hast more coins in that pouch!'

Gurth grinned, which was his nearest approach to a laugh, as he replied, 'About the same quantity which thou hast just told over so carefully.' He then folded the acquittance, and put it under his cap, adding, 'Peril of thy beard, Jew, see that this be full and ample!' He filled himself, unbidden, a third goblet of wine, and left the apartment without ceremony.

'Rebecca,' said the Jew, 'that Ishmaelite hath gone somewhat beyond me. Nevertheless, his master is a good youth; ay, and I am well pleased that he hath gained shekels of gold and shekels of silver, even by the speed of his horse and by the strength of his lance, which, like that of Goliath the Philistine, might vie with a weaver's beam.'

As he turned to receive Rebecca's answer, he observed that during his chaffering with Gurth she had left the apartment unperceived.

In the meanwhile, Gurth had descended the stair, and, having reached the dark ante-chamber or hall, was puzzling about to discover the entrance, when a figure in white, shown by a small silver lamp which she held in her hand, beckoned him into a side apartment. Gurth had some reluctance to obey the summons. Rough and impetuous as a wild boar where only earthly force was to be apprehended, he had all the characteristic terrors of a Saxon respecting fauns, forest fiends, white women, and the whole of the superstitions which his ancestors had brought with them from the wilds of Germany. He remembered, moreover, that he was in the house of a Jew, a people who, besides the other unamiable qualities which popular report ascribed to them, were supposed to be profound necromancers and cabalists. Nevertheless, after a moment's pause, he obeyed the beckoning summons of the apparition, and followed her into the apartment which she indicated, where he found, to his joyful surprise, that his fair guide was the beautiful Jewess whom he had seen at the tournament, and a short time in her father's apartment.

She asked him the particulars of his transaction with Isaac, which he detailed accurately.

'My father did but jest with thee, good fellow,' said Rebecca; 'he owes thy master deeper kindness than these arms and steeds could pay, were their value tenfold. What sum didst thou pay my father even now?'

'Eighty zecchins,' said Gurth, surprised at the question.

'In this purse,' said Rebecca, 'thou wilt find a hundred. Restore to thy master that which is his due, and enrich thyself with the remainder. Haste — begone — stay not to render thanks! and beware how you pass through this crowded town, where thou mayst easily lose both thy burden and thy life. Reuben,' she added, clapping her hands together, 'light forth this stranger, and fail not to draw lock and bar behind him.'

Reuben, a dark-browed and black-bearded Israelite, obeyed her summons, with a torch in his hand; undid the outward door of the house, and conducting Gurth across a paved court let him out through a wicket in the entrance-gate, which he closed behind him with such bolts and chains as would well have become that of a prison.

'By St. Dunstan,' said Gurth, as he stumbled up the dark avenue, 'this is no Jewess, but an angel from heaven! Ten zecchins from my brave young master — twenty from this pearl of Zion! Oh, happy day! Such another, Gurth, will redeem thy bondage, and make thee a brother as free of thy guild as the best. And then do I lay down my swineherd's horn and staff, and take the freeman's sword and buckler, and follow my young master to the death, without hiding either my face or my name.'

CHAPTER XI

1st Outlaw. Stand, sir, and throw us that you have about you ;
If not, we 'll make you sit, and rife you.

Speed. Sir, we are undone ! these are the villains
That all the travellers do fear so much.

Val. My friends —

1st Out. That 's not so, sir, we are your enemies.

2d Out. Peace ! we 'll hear him.

3d Out. Ay, by my beard, will we ;
For he 's a proper man.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

THE nocturnal adventures of Gurth were not yet concluded ; indeed, he himself became partly of that mind when, after passing one or two straggling houses which stood in the outskirts of the village, he found himself in a deep lane, running between two banks overgrown with hazel and holly, while here and there a dwarf oak flung its arms altogether across the path. The lane was, moreover, much rutted and broken up by the carriages which had recently transported articles of various kinds to the tournament ; and it was dark, for the banks and bushes intercepted the light of the harvest moon.

From the village were heard the distant sounds of revelry, mixed occasionally with loud laughter, sometimes broken by screams, and sometimes by wild strains of distant music. All these sounds, intimating the disorderly state of the town, crowded with military nobles and their dissolute attendants, gave Gurth some uneasiness. 'The Jewess was right,' he said to himself. 'By heaven and St. Dunstan, I would I were safe at my journey's end with all this treasure ! Here are such numbers, I will not say of arrant thieves, but of errant knights and errant squires, errant monks and errant minstrels, errant jugglers and errant jesters, that a man with a single merk would be in danger, much more a poor swineherd with a whole bagful of zecchins. Would I were out of the shade of these

infernal bushes, that I might at least see any of St. Nicholas's clerks before they spring on my shoulders !'

Gurth accordingly hastened his pace, in order to gain the open common to which the lane led, but was not so fortunate as to accomplish his object. Just as he had attained the upper end of the lane, where the underwood was thickest, four men sprung upon him, even as his fears anticipated, two from each side of the road, and seized him so fast that resistance, if at first practicable, would have been now too late. 'Surrender your charge,' said one of them; 'we are the deliverers of the commonwealth, who ease every man of his burden.'

'You should not ease me of mine so lightly,' muttered Gurth, whose surly honesty could not be tamed even by the pressure of immediate violence, 'had I it but in my power to give three strokes in its defence.'

'We shall see that presently,' said the robber; and, speaking to his companions, he added, 'bring along the knave. I see he would have his head broken as well as his purse cut, and so be let blood in two veins at once.'

Gurth was hurried along agreeably to this mandate, and having been dragged somewhat roughly over the bank on the left-hand side of the lane, found himself in a straggling thicket, which lay betwixt it and the open common. He was compelled to follow his rough conductors into the very depth of this cover, where they stopt unexpectedly in an irregular open space, free in a great measure from trees, and on which, therefore, the beams of the moon fell without much interruption from boughs and leaves. Here his captors were joined by two other persons, apparently belonging to the gang. They had short swords by their sides, and quarter-staves in their hands, and Gurth could now observe that all six wore visors, which rendered their occupation a matter of no question, even had their former proceedings left it in doubt.

'What money hast thou, churl?' said one of the thieves.

'Thirty zecchins of my own property,' answered Gurth, doggedly.

'A forfeit — a forfeit,' shouted the robbers; 'a Saxon hath thirty zecchins, and returns sober from a village! An undeniable and unredeemable forfeit of all he hath about him.'

'I hoarded it to purchase my freedom,' said Gurth.

'Thou art an ass,' replied one of the thieves; 'three quarts of double ale had rendered thee as free as thy master, ay, and freer too, if he be a Saxon like thyself.'

'A sad truth,' replied Gurth; 'but if these same thirty zecchins will buy my freedom from you, unloose my hands and I will pay them to you.'

'Hold,' said one who seemed to exercise some authority over the others; 'this bag which thou bearest, as I can feel through thy cloak, contains more coin than thou hast told us of.'

'It is the good knight my master's,' answered Gurth, 'of which, assuredly, I would not have spoken a word, had you been satisfied with working your will upon mine own property.'

'Thou art an honest fellow,' replied the robber, 'I warrant thee; and we worship not St. Nicholas so devoutly but what thy thirty zecchins may yet escape, if thou deal uprightly with us. Meantime, render up thy trust for the time.' So saying, he took from Gurth's breast the large leathern pouch, in which the purse given him by Rebecca was inclosed, as well as the rest of the zecchins, and then continued his interrogation —

'Who is thy master?'

'The Disinherited Knight,' said Gurth.

'Whose good lance,' replied the robber, 'won the prize in to-day's tourney? What is his name and lineage?'

'It is his pleasure,' answered Gurth, 'that they be concealed; and from me, assuredly, you will learn nought of them.'

'What is thine own name and lineage?'

'To tell that,' said Gurth, 'might reveal my master's.'

'Thou art a saucy groom,' said the robber; 'but of that anon. How comes thy master by this gold? is it of his inheritance, or by what means hath it accrued to him?'

'By his good lance,' answered Gurth. 'These bags contain the ransom of four good horses and four good suits of armour.'

'How much is there?' demanded the robber.

'Two hundred zecchins.'

'Only two hundred zecchins!' said the bandit; 'your master hath dealt liberally by the vanquished, and put them to a cheap ransom. Name those who paid the gold.'

Gurth did so.

'The armour and horse of the Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert — at what ransom were they held? Thou seest thou canst not deceive me.'

'My master,' replied Gurth, 'will take nought from the Templar save his life's-blood. They are on terms of mortal defiance, and cannot hold courteous intercourse together.'

'Indeed!' repeated the robber, and paused after he had said

the word. 'And what wert thou now doing at Ashby with such a charge in thy custody?'

'I went thither to render to Isaac the Jew of York,' replied Gurth, 'the price of a suit of armour with which he fitted my master for this tournament.'

'And how much didst thou pay to Isaac? Methinks, to judge by weight, there is still two hundred zecchins in that pouch.'

'I paid to Isaac,' said the Saxon, 'eighty zecchins, and he restored me a hundred in lieu thereof.'

'How! what!' exclaimed all the robbers at once; 'darest thou trifle with us, that thou tellest such improbable lies?'

'What I tell you,' said Gurth, 'is as true as the moon is in heaven. You will find the just sum in a silken purse within the leathern pouch, and separate from the rest of the gold.'

'Bethink thee, man,' said the Captain, 'thou speakest of a Jew — of an Israelite, as unapt to restore gold as the dry sand of his deserts to return the cup of water which the pilgrim spills upon them.'

'There is no more mercy in them,' said another of the banditti, 'than in an unbribed sheriff's officer.'

'It is, however, as I say,' said Gurth.

'Strike a light instantly,' said the Captain; 'I will examine this said purse; and if it be as this fellow says, the Jew's bounty is little less miraculous than the stream which relieved his fathers in the wilderness.'

A light was procured accordingly, and the robber proceeded to examine the purse. The others crowded around him, and even two who had hold of Gurth relaxed their grasp while they stretched their necks to see the issue of the search. Availing himself of their negligence, by a sudden exertion of strength and activity Gurth shook himself free of their hold, and might have escaped, could he have resolved to leave his master's property behind him. But such was no part of his intention. He wrenched a quarter-staff from one of the fellows, struck down the Captain, who was altogether unaware of his purpose, and had wellnigh repossessed himself of the pouch and treasure. The thieves, however, were too nimble for him, and again secured both the bag and the trusty Gurth.

'Knave!' said the Captain, getting up, 'thou hast broken my head, and with other men of our sort thou wouldst fare the worse for thy insolence. First thou shalt know thy fate instantly. First let us speak of thy master; the knight's matters must go before the squire's, according to the due order

of chivalry. Stand thou fast in the meantime; if thou stir again, thou shalt have that will make thee quiet for thy life. Comrades! he then said, addressing his gang, 'this purse is embroidered with Hebrew characters, and I well believe the yeoman's tale is true. The errant knight, his master, must needs pass us toll-free. He is too like ourselves for us to make booty of him, since dogs should not worry dogs where wolves and foxes are to be found in abundance.'

'Like us!' answered one of the gang; 'I should like to hear how that is made good.'

'Why, thou fool,' answered the Captain, 'is he not poor and disinherited as we are? Doth he not win his substance at the sword's point as we do? Hath he not beaten Front-de-Bœuf and Malvoisin, even as we would beat them if we could? Is he not the enemy to life and death of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whom we have so much reason to fear? And were all this otherwise, wouldst thou have us show a worse conscience than an unbeliever, a Hebrew Jew?'

'Nay, that were a shame,' muttered the other fellow; 'and yet, when I served in the band of stout old Gandelyn, we had no such scruples of conscience. And this insolent peasant — he too, I warrant me, is to be dismissed scatheless?'

'Not if *thou* canst scathe him,' replied the captain. 'Here, fellow,' continued he, addressing Gurth, 'canst thou use the staff, that thou startest to it so readily?'

'I think,' said Gurth, 'thou shouldst be best able to reply to that question.'

'Nay, by my troth, thou gavest me a round knock,' replied the Captain; 'do as much for this fellow, and thou shalt pass scot-free; and if thou dost not — why, by my faith, as thou art such a sturdy knave, I think I must pay thy ransom myself. Take thy staff, Miller,' he added, 'and keep thy head; and do you others let the fellow go, and give him a staff — there is light enough to lay on load by.'

The two champions, being alike armed with quarter-staves, stepped forward into the centre of the open space, in order to have the full benefit of the moonlight; the thieves in the meantime laughing, and crying to their comrade, 'Miller! beware thy toll-dish.' The Miller, on the other hand, holding his quarter-staff by the middle, and making it flourish round his head after the fashion which the French call *faire le moulinet*, exclaimed boastfully, 'Come on, churl, an thou darest: thou shalt feel the strength of a miller's thumb!'

'If thou be'st a reiller,' answered Gurth, undauntedly, making his weapon play around his head with equal dexterity, 'thou art doubly a thief, and I, as a true man, bid thee defiance.'

So saying, the two champions closed together, and for a few minutes they displayed great equality in strength, courage, and skill, intercepting and returning the blows of their adversary with the most rapid dexterity, while, from the continued clatter of their weapons, a person at a distance might have supposed that there were at least six persons engaged on each side. Less obstinate, and even less dangerous, combats have been described in good heroic verse; but that of Gurth and the Miller must remain unsung, for want of a sacred poet to do justice to the eventful progress. Yet, though quarter-staff play be out of date, what we can in prose we will do for these bold champions.

Long they fought equally, until the Miller began to lose temper at finding himself so stoutly opposed, and at hearing the laughter of his companions, who, as usual in such cases, enjoyed his vexation. This was not a state of mind favourable to the noble game of quarter-staff, in which, as in ordinary cudgel-playing, the utmost coolness is requisite; and it gave Gurth, whose temper was steady, though surly, the opportunity of acquiring a decided advantage, in availing himself of which he displayed great mastery.

The Miller pressed furiously forward, dealing blows with either end of his weapon alternately, and striving to come to half-staff distance, while Gurth defended himself against the attack, keeping his hands about a yard asunder, and covering himself by shifting his weapon with great celerity, so as to protect his head and body. Thus did he maintain the defensive, making his eye, foot, and hand keep true time, until, observing his antagonist to lose wind, he darted the staff at his face with his left hand; and, as the Miller endeavoured to parry the thrust, he slid his right hand down to his left, and with the full swing of the weapon struck his opponent on the left side of the head, who instantly measured his length upon the green sward.

'Well and yeomanly done!' shouted the robbers; 'fair play and Old England for ever! The Saxon hath saved both his purse and his hide, and the Miller has met his match.'

'Thou mayst go thy ways, my friend,' said the Captain, addressing Gurth, in special confirmation of the general voice,

'and I will cause two of my comrades to guide thee by the best way to thy master's pavilion, and to guard thee from night-walkers that might have less tender consciences than ours; for there is many one of them upon the amble in such a night as this. Take heed, however,' he added sternly; 'remember thou hast refused to tell thy name; ask not after ours, nor endeavour to discover who or what we are, for, if thou makest such an attempt, thou wilt come by worse fortune than has yet befallen thee.'

Gurth thanked the Captain for his courtesy, and promised to attend to his recommendation. Two of the outlaws, taking up their quarter-staves, and desiring Gurth to follow close in the rear, walked roundly forward along a bye-path, which traversed the thicket and the broken ground adjacent to it. On the very verge of the thicket two men spoke to his conductors, and receiving an answer in a whisper, withdrew into the wood, and suffered them to pass unmolested. This circumstance induced Gurth to believe both that the gang was strong in numbers, and that they kept regular guards around their place of rendezvous.

When they arrived on the open heath, where Gurth might have had some trouble in finding his road, the thieves guided him straight forward to the top of a little eminence, whence he could see, spread beneath him in the moonlight, the palisades of the lists, the glimmering pavilions pitched at either end, with their pennons which adorned them fluttering in the moonbeam, and from which could be heard the hum of the song with which the sentinels were beguiling their night-watch.

Here the thieves stopped.

'We go with you no farther,' said they; 'it were not safe that we should do so. Remember the warning you have received: keep secret what has this night befallen you, and you will have no room to repent it; neglect what is now told you, and the Tower of London shall not protect you against our revenge.'

'Good-night to you, kind sirs,' said Gurth; 'I shall remember your orders, and trust that there is no offence in wishing you a safer and an honest trade.'

Thus they parted, the outlaws returning in the direction from whence they had come, and Gurth proceeding to the tent of his master, to whom, notwithstanding the injunction he had received, he communicated the whole adventures of the evening.

The Disinherited Knight was filled with astonishment, no less at the generosity of Rebecca, by which, however, he resolved he would not profit, than that of the robbers, to whose profession such a quality seemed totally foreign. His course of reflections upon these singular circumstances was, however, interrupted by the necessity for taking repose, which the fatigue of the preceding day and the propriety of refreshing himself for the morrow's encounter rendered alike indispensable.

The knight, therefore, stretched himself for repose upon a rich couch with which the tent was provided; and the faithful Gurth, extending his hardy limbs upon a bear-skin which formed a sort of carpet to the pavilion, laid himself across the opening of the tent, so that no one could enter without awakening him.

CHAPTER XII

The heralds left their pricking up and down,
Now ringen trumpets loud and clarion.
There is no more to say, but east and west,
In go the speares sadly in the rest,
In goth the sharp spur into the side,
There see men who can just and who can ride ;
There shiver shaftes upon shieldes thick,
He feeleth through the heart-spone the prick ;
Up springen speares, twenty feet in height,
Out go the swordes to the silver bright ;
The helms they to-hewn and to-ahred ;
Out burst the blood with stern streames red.

CHAUCER.

MORNING arose in unclouded splendour, and ere the sun was much above the horizon the idlest or the most eager of the spectators appeared on the common, moving to the lists as to a general centre, in order to secure a favourable situation for viewing the continuation of the expected games.

The marshals and their attendants appeared next on the field, together with the heralds, for the purpose of receiving the names of the knights who intended to joust, with the side which each chose to espouse. This was a necessary precaution, in order to secure equality betwixt the two bodies who should be opposed to each other.

According to due formality, the Disinherited Knight was to be considered as leader of the one body, while Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who had been rated as having done second-best in the preceding day, was named first champion of the other band. Those who had concurred in the challenge adhered to his party, of course, excepting only Ralph de Vipont, whom his fall had rendered unfit so soon to put on his armour. There was no want of distinguished and noble candidates to fill up the ranks on either side.

In fact, although the general tournament, in which all

knights fought at once, was more dangerous than single encounters, they were, nevertheless, more frequented and practised by the chivalry of the age. Many knights, who had not sufficient confidence in their own skill to defy a single adversary of high reputation, were, nevertheless, desirous of displaying their valour in the general combat, where they might meet others with whom they were more upon an equality. On the present occasion, about fifty knights were inscribed as desirous of combating upon each side, when the marshals declared that no more could be admitted, to the disappointment of several who were too late in preferring their claim to be included.

About the hour of ten o'clock the whole plain was crowded with horsemen, horsewomen, and foot-passengers, hastening to the tournament; and shortly after, a grand flourish of trumpets announced Prince John and his retinue, attended by many of those knights who meant to take share in the game, as well as others who had no such intention.

About the same time arrived Cedric the Saxon, with the Lady Rowena, unattended, however, by Athelstane. This Saxon lord had arrayed his tall and strong person in armour, in order to take his place among the combatants; and, considerably to the surprise of Cedric, had chosen to enlist himself on the part of the Knight Templar. The Saxon, indeed, had remonstrated strongly with his friend upon the injudicious choice he had made of his party; but he had only received that sort of answer usually given by those who are more obstinate in following their own course than strong in justifying it.

His best, if not his only, reason for adhering to the party of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Athelstane had the prudence to keep to himself. Though his apathy of disposition prevented his taking any means to recommend himself to the Lady Rowena, he was, nevertheless, by no means insensible to her charms, and considered his union with her as a matter already fixed beyond doubt by the assent of Cedric and her other friends. It had therefore been with smothered displeasure that the proud though indolent Lord of Coningsburgh beheld the victor of the preceding day select Rowena as the object of that honour which it became his privilege to confer. In order to punish him for a preference which seemed to interfere with his own suit, Athelstane, confident of his strength, and to whom his flatterers, at least, ascribed great skill in arms, had determined not only to deprive the Disinherited Knight of his

powerful succour, but, if an opportunity should occur, to make him feel the weight of his battle-axe.

De Bracy, and other knights attached to Prince John, in obedience to a hint from him, had joined the party of the challengers, John being desirous to secure, if possible, the victory to that side. On the other hand, many other knights, both English and Norman, natives and strangers, took part against the challengers, the more readily that the opposite band was to be led by so distinguished a champion as the Disinherited Knight had approved himself.

As soon as Prince John observed that the destined Queen of the day had arrived upon the field, assuming that air of courtesy which sat well upon him when he was pleased to exhibit it, he rode forward to meet her, doffed his bonnet, and, alighting from his horse, assisted the Lady Rowena from her saddle, while his followers uncovered at the same time, and one of the most distinguished dismounted to hold her palfrey.

'It is thus,' said Prince John, 'that we set the dutiful example of loyalty to the Queen of Love and Beauty, and are ourselves her guide to the throne which she must this day occupy. Ladies,' he said, 'attend your Queen, as you wish in your turn to be distinguished by like honours.'

So saying, the Prince marshalled Rowena to the seat of honour opposite his own, while the fairest and most distinguished ladies present crowded after her to obtain places as near as possible to their temporary sovereign.

No sooner was Rowena seated than a burst of music, half-drowned by the shouts of the multitude, greeted her new dignity. Meantime, the sun shone fierce and bright upon the polished arms of the knights of either side, who crowded the opposite extremities of the lists, and held eager conference together concerning the best mode of arranging their line of battle and supporting the conflict.

The heralds then proclaimed silence until the laws of the tourney should be rehearsed. These were calculated in some degree to abate the dangers of the day — a precaution the more necessary as the conflict was to be maintained with sharp swords and pointed lances.

The champions were therefore prohibited to thrust with the sword, and were confined to striking. A knight, it was announced, might use a mace or battle-axe at pleasure; but the dagger was a prohibited weapon. A knight unhorsed might renew the fight on foot with any other on the opposite side in

the same predicament; but mounted horsemen were in that case forbidden to assail him. When any knight could force his antagonist to the extremity of the lists, so as to touch the palisade with his person or arms, such opponent was obliged to yield himself vanquished, and his armour and horse were placed at the disposal of the conqueror. A knight thus overcome was not permitted to take farther share in the combat. If any combatant was struck down, and unable to recover his feet, his squire or page might enter the lists and drag his master out of the press; but in that case the knight was adjudged vanquished, and his arms and horse declared forfeited. The combat was to cease as soon as Prince John should throw down his leading staff, or truncheon — another precaution usually taken to prevent the unnecessary effusion of blood by the too long endurance of a sport so desperate. Any knight breaking the rules of the tournament, or otherwise transgressing the rules of honourable chivalry, was liable to be stript of his arms, and, having his shield reversed, to be placed in that posture astride upon the bars of the palisade, and exposed to public derision, in punishment of his un-knightly conduct. Having announced these precautions, the heralds concluded with an exhortation to each good knight to do his duty, and to merit favour from the Queen of Beauty and of Love.

This proclamation having been made, the heralds withdrew to their stations. The knights, entering at either end of the lists, in long procession, arranged themselves in a double file, precisely opposite to each other, the leader of each party being in the centre of the foremost rank, a post which he did not occupy until each had carefully arranged the ranks of his party, and stationed every one in his place.

It was a goodly, and at the same time an anxious, sight to behold so many gallant champions, mounted bravely and armed richly, stand ready prepared for an encounter so formidable, seated on their war-saddles like so many pillars of iron, and awaiting the signal of encounter with the same ardour as their generous steeds, which, by neighing and pawing the ground, gave signal of their impatience.

As yet the knights held their long lances upright, their bright points glancing to the sun, and the streamers with which they were decorated fluttering over the plumage of the helmets. Thus they remained while the marshals of the field surveyed their ranks with the utmost exactness, lest either

party had more or fewer than the appointed number. The tale was found exactly complete. The marshals then withdrew from the lists, and William de Wyvil, with a voice of thunder, pronounced the signal words — '*Laissez aller!*' The trumpets sounded as he spoke; the spears of the champions were at once lowered and placed in the rests; the spurs were dashed into the flanks of the horses; and the two foremost ranks of either party rushed upon each other in full gallop, and met in the middle of the lists with a shock the sound of which was heard at a mile's distance. The rear rank of each party advanced at a slower pace to sustain the defeated, and follow up the success of the victors, of their party.

The consequences of the encounter were not instantly seen, for the dust raised by the trampling of so many steeds darkened the air, and it was a minute ere the anxious spectators could see the fate of the encounter. When the fight became visible, half the knights on each side were dismounted — some by the dexterity of their adversary's lance; some by the superior weight and strength of opponents, which had borne down both horse and man; some lay stretched on earth as if never more to rise; some had already gained their feet, and were closing hand to hand with those of their antagonists who were in the same predicament; and several on both sides, who had received wounds by which they were disabled, were stopping their blood by their scarfs, and endeavouring to extricate themselves from the tumult. The mounted knights, whose lances had been almost all broken by the fury of the encounter, were now closely engaged with their swords, shouting their war-cries, and exchanging buffets, as if honour and life depended on the issue of the combat.

The tumult was presently increased by the advance of the second rank on either side, which, acting as a reserve, now rushed on to aid their companions. The followers of Brian de Bois-Guilbert shouted — '*Ha! Beau-seant! Beau-seant!*' For the Temple! For the Temple! The opposite party shouted in answer — '*Desdichado! Desdichado!*' which watchword they took from the motto upon their leader's shield.

The champions thus encountering each other with the utmost fury, and with alternate success, the tide of battle seemed to flow now toward the southern, now toward the

¹ *Beau-seant* was the name of the Templars' banner, which was half black, half white, to intimate, it is said, that they were candid and fair towards Christians, but black and terrible towards infidels.

northern, extremity of the lists, as the one or the other party prevailed. Meantime the clang of the blows and the shouts of the combatants mixed fearfully with the sound of the trumpets, and drowned the groans of those who fell, and lay rolling defenceless beneath the feet of the horses. The splendid armour of the combatants was now defaced with dust and blood, and gave way at every stroke of the sword and battle-axe. The gay plumage, shorn from the crests, drifted upon the breeze like snowflakes. All that was beautiful and graceful in the martial array had disappeared, and what was now visible was only calculated to awake terror or compassion.

Yet such is the force of habit, that not only the vulgar spectators, who are naturally attracted by sights of horror, but even the ladies of distinction, who crowded the galleries, saw the conflict with a thrilling interest certainly, but without a wish to withdraw their eyes from a sight so terrible. Here and there, indeed, a fair cheek might turn pale, or a faint scream might be heard, as a lover, a brother, or a husband was struck from his horse. But, in general, the ladies around encouraged the combatants, not only by clapping their hands and waving their veils and kerchiefs, but even by exclaiming, 'Brave lance! Good sword!' when any successful thrust or blow took place under their observation.

Such being the interest taken by the fair sex in this bloody game, that of the men is the more easily understood. It showed itself in loud acclamations upon every change of fortune, while all eyes were so riveted on the lists that the spectators seemed as if they themselves had dealt and received the blows which were there so freely bestowed. And between every pause was heard the voice of the heralds, exclaiming, 'Fight on, brave knights! Man dies, but glory lives! Fight on; death is better than defeat! Fight on, brave knights! for bright eyes behold your deeds!'

Amid the varied fortunes of the combat, the eyes of all endeavoured to discover the leaders of each band, who, mingling in the thick of the fight, encouraged their companions both by voice and example. Both displayed great feats of gallantry, nor did either Bois-Guilbert or the Disinherited Knight find in the ranks opposed to them a champion who could be termed their unquestioned match. They repeatedly endeavoured to single out each other, spurred by mutual animosity, and aware that the fall of either leader might be considered as decisive of

victory. Such, however, was the crowd and confusion that, during the earlier part of the conflict, their efforts to meet were unavailing, and they were repeatedly separated by the eagerness of their followers, each of whom was anxious to win honour by measuring his strength against the leader of the opposite party.

But when the field became thin by the numbers on either side who had yielded themselves vanquished, had been compelled to the extremity of the lists, or been otherwise rendered incapable of continuing the strife, the Templar and the Disinherited Knight at length encountered hand to hand, with all the fury that mortal animosity, joined to rivalry of honour, could inspire. Such was the address of each in parrying and striking, that the spectators broke forth into a unanimous and involuntary shout, expressive of their delight and admiration.

But at this moment the party of the Disinherited Knight had the worst; the gigantic arm of Front-de-Bœuf on the one flank, and the ponderous strength of Athelstane on the other, bearing down and dispersing those immediately exposed to them. Finding themselves freed from their immediate antagonists, it seems to have occurred to both these knights at the same instant that they would render the most decisive advantage to their party by aiding the Templar in his contest with his rival. Turning their horses, therefore, at the same moment, the Norman spurred against the Disinherited Knight on the one side and the Saxon on the other. It was utterly impossible that the object of this unequal and unexpected assault could have sustained it, had he not been warned by a general cry from the spectators, who could not but take interest in one exposed to such disadvantage.

'Beware! beware! Sir Disinherited!' was shouted so universally that the knight became aware of his danger; and striking a full blow at the Templar, he reined back his steed in the same moment, so as to escape the charge of Athelstane and Front-de-Bœuf. These knights, therefore, their aim being thus eluded, rushed from opposite sides betwixt the object of their attack and the Templar, almost running their horses against each other ere they could stop their career. Recovering their horses, however, and wheeling them round, the whole three pursued their united purpose of bearing to the earth the Disinherited Knight.

Nothing could have saved him except the remarkable

strength and activity of the noble horse which he had won on the preceding day.

This stood him in the more stead, as the horse of Bois-Guilbert was wounded, and those of Front-de-Bœuf and Athelstane were both tired with the weight o' their gigantic masters, clad in complete armour, and with the preceding exertions of the day. The masterly horsemanship of the Disinherited Knight, and the activity of the noble animal which he mounted, enabled him for a few minutes to keep at sword's point his three antagonists, turning and wheeling with the agility of a hawk upon the wing, keeping his enemies as far separate as he could, and rushing now against the one, now against the other, dealing sweeping blows with his sword, without waiting to receive those which were aimed at him in return.

But although the lists rang with the applauses of his dexterity, it was evident that he must at last be overpowered; and the nobles around Prince John implored him with one voice to throw down his warder, and to save so brave a knight from the disgrace of being overcome by odds.

'Not I, by the light of Heaven!' answered Prince John; 'this same springal, who conceals his name and despises our proffered hospitality, has already gained one prize, and may now afford to let others have their turn.' As he spoke thus, an unexpected incident changed the fortune of the day.

There was among the ranks of the Disinherited Knight a champion in black armour, mounted on a black horse, large of size, tall, and to all appearance powerful and strong, like the rider by whom he was mounted. This knight, who bore on his shield no device of any kind, had hitherto evinced very little interest in the event of the fight, beating off with seeming ease those combatants who attacked him, but neither pursuing his advantages nor himself assailing any one. In short, he had hitherto acted the part rather of a spectator than of a party in the tournament, a circumstance which procured him among the spectators the name of *Le Noir Faineant*, or the Black Sluggard.

At once this knight seemed to throw aside his apathy, when he discovered the leader of his party so hard bestead; for, setting spurs to his horse, which was quite fresh, he came to his assistance like a thunderbolt, exclaiming, in a voice like a trumpet-call, '*Desdichado*, to the rescue!' It was high time; for, while the Disinherited Knight was pressing upon the Templar, Front-de-Bœuf had got nigh to him with his uplifted sword; but ere the blow could descend, the Sable Knight dealt a stroke

on the head, which, glancing from the polished helmet, lighted with violence scarcely abated on the chamfron of the steed, and Front-de-Bœuf rolled on the ground, both horse and man equally stunned by the fury of the blow. *Le Noir Faincant* then turned his horse upon Athelstane of Coningsburgh; and his own sword having been broken in his encounter with Front-de-Bœuf, he wrenched from the hand of the bulky Saxon the battle-axe which he wielded, and, like one familiar with the use of the weapon, bestowed him such a blow upon the crest that Athelstane also lay senseless on the field. Having achieved this double feat, for which he was the more highly applauded that it was totally unexpected from him, the knight seemed to resume the sluggishness of his character, returning calmly to the northern extremity of the lists, leaving his leader to cope as he best could with Brian de Bois-Guilbert. This was no longer matter of so much difficulty as formerly. The Templar's horse had bled much, and gave way under the shock of the Disinherited Knight's charge. Brian de Bois-Guilbert rolled on the field, encumbered with the stirrup, from which he was unable to draw his foot. His antagonist sprung from horse-back, waved his fatal sword over the head of his adversary, and commanded him to yield himself; when Prince John, more moved by the Templar's dangerous situation than he had been by that of his rival, saved him the mortification of confessing himself vanquished, by casting down his warder and putting an end to the conflict.

It was, indeed, only the relics and embers of the fight which continued to burn; for of the few knights who still continued in the lists, the greater part had, by tacit consent, forborne the conflict for some time, leaving it to be determined by the strife of the leaders.

The squires, who had found it a matter of danger and difficulty to attend their masters during the engagement, now thronged into the lists to pay their dutiful attendance to the wounded, who were removed with the utmost care and attention to the neighbouring pavilions, or to the quarters prepared for them in the adjoining village.

Thus ended the memorable field of Ashby-de-la-Zouche, one of the most gallantly contested tournaments of that age; for although only four knights, including one who was smothered by the heat of his armour, had died upon the field, yet upwards of thirty were desperately wounded, four or five of whom never recovered. Several more were disabled for life; and those who

escaped best carried the marks of the conflict to the grave with them. Hence it is always mentioned in the old records as the 'gentle and joyous passage of arms of Ashby.'

It being now the duty of Prince John to name the knight who had done best, he determined that the honour of the day remained with the knight whom the popular voice had termed *Le Noir Faineant*. It was pointed out to the Prince, in impeachment of this decree, that the victory had been in fact won by the Disinherited Knight, who, in the course of the day, had overcome six champions with his own hand, and who had finally unhorsed and struck down the leader of the opposite party. But Prince John adhered to his own opinion, on the ground that the Disinherited Knight and his party had lost the day but for the powerful assistance of the Knight of the Black Armour, to whom, therefore, he persisted in awarding the prize.

To the surprise of all present, however, the knight thus preferred was nowhere to be found. He had left the lists immediately when the conflict ceased, and had been observed by some spectators to move down one of the forest glades with the same slow pace and listless and indifferent manner which had procured him the epithet of the Black Sluggard. After he had been summoned twice by sound of trumpet and proclamation of the heralds, it became necessary to name another to receive the honours which had been assigned to him. Prince John had now no further excuse for resisting the claim of the Disinherited Knight, whom, therefore, he named the champion of the day.

Through a field slippery with blood and encumbered with broken armour and the bodies of slain and wounded horses, the marshals of the lists again conducted the victor to the foot of Prince John's throne.

'Disinherited Knight,' said Prince John, 'since by that title only you will consent to be known to us, we a second time award to you the honours of this tournament, and announce to you your right to claim and receive from the hands of the Queen of Love and Beauty the chaplet of honour which your valour has justly deserved.' The Knight bowed low and gracefully, but returned no answer.

While the trumpets sounded, while the heralds strained their voices in proclaiming honour to the brave and glory to the victor, while ladies waved their silken kerchiefs and embroidered veils, and while all ranks joined in a clamorous shout of exultation, the marshals conducted the Disinherited Knight

across the lists to the foot of that throne of honour which was occupied by the Lady Rowena.

On the lower step of this throne the champion was made to kneel down. Indeed, his whole action since the fight had ended seemed rather to have been upon the impulse of those around him than from his own free will ; and it was observed that he tottered as they guided him the second time across the lists. Rowena, descending from her station with a graceful and dignified step, was about to place the chaplet which she held in her hand upon the helmet of the champion, when the marshals exclaimed with one voice, ' It must not be thus ; his head must be bare.' The knight muttered faintly a few words, which were lost in the hollow of his helmet ; but their purport seemed to be a desire that his casque might not be removed.

Whether from love of form or from curiosity, the marshals paid no attention to his expressions of reluctance, but unhelmed him by cutting the laces of his casque, and undoing the fastening of his gorget. When the helmet was removed, the well-formed yet sun-burnt features of a young man of twenty-five were seen, amidst a profusion of short fair hair. His countenance was as pale as death, and marked in one or two places with streaks of blood.

Rowena had no sooner beheld him than she uttered a faint shriek ; but at once summoning up the energy of her disposition, and compelling herself, as it were, to proceed, while her frame yet trembled with the violence of sudden emotion, she placed upon the drooping head of the victor the splendid chaplet which was the destined reward of the day, and pronounced in a clear and distinct tone these words : ' I bestow on thee this chaplet, Sir Knight, as the meed of valour assigned to this day's victor.' Here she paused a moment, and then firmly added, ' And upon brows more worthy could a wreath of chivalry never be placed !'

The knight stooped his head and kissed the hand of the lovely Sovereign by whom his valour had been rewarded ; and then, sinking yet farther forward, lay prostrate at her feet.

There was a general consternation. Cedric, who had been struck mute by the sudden appearance of his banished son, now rushed forward, as if to separate him from Rowena. But this had been already accomplished by the marshals of the field, who, guessing the cause of Ivanhoe's swoon, had hastened to undo his armour, and found that the head of a lance had penetrated his breastplate and inflicted a wound in his side.

CHAPTER XIII

'Heroes, approach !' Atrides thus aloud ;
'Stand forth distinguish'd from the circling crowd,
Ye who by skill or manly force may claim
Your rivals to surpass and merit fame.
This cow, worth twenty oxen, is decreed
For him who farthest sends the winged reed.'

Iliad.

THE name of Ivanhoe was no sooner pronounced than it flew from mouth to mouth with all the celerity with which eagerness could convey and curiosity receive it. It was not long ere it reached the circle of the Prince, whose brow darkened as he heard the news. Looking around him, however, with an air of scorn, 'My lords,' said he, 'and especially you, Sir Prior, what think ye of the doctrine the learned tell us concerning innate attractions and antipathies ? Methinks that I felt the presence of my brother's minion, even when I least guessed whom yonder suit of armour inclosed.'

'Front-de-Bœuf must prepare to restore his fief of Ivanhoe,' said De Bracy, who, having discharged his part honourably in the tournament, had laid his shield and helmet aside, and again mingled with the Prince's retinue.

'Ay,' answered Waldemar Fitzurse, 'this gallant is likely to reclaim the castle and manor which Richard assigned to him, and which your Highness's generosity has since given to Front-de-Bœuf.'

'Front-de-Bœuf,' replied John, 'is a man more willing to swallow three manors such as Ivanhoe than to disgorge one of them. For the rest, sirs, I hope none here will deny my right to confer the fiefs of the crown upon the faithful followers who are around me, and ready to perform the usual military service, in the room of those who have wandered to foreign countries, and can neither render homage nor service when called upon.'

The audience were too much interested in the question not

to pronounce the Prince's assumed right altogether indubitable. 'A generous Prince! a most noble Lord, who thus takes upon himself the task of rewarding his faithful followers!'

Such were the words which burst from the train, expectants all of them of similar grants at the expense of King Richard's followers and favourites, if indeed they had not as yet received such. Prior Aymer also assented to the general proposition, observing, however, 'That the blessed Jerusalem could not indeed be termed a foreign country. She was *communis mater* — the mother of all Christians. But he saw not,' he declared, 'how the Knight of Ivanhoe could plead any advantage from this, since he (the Prior) was assured that the crusaders under Richard had never proceeded much farther than Askalon, which, as all the world knew, was a town of the Philistines, and entitled to none of the privileges of the Holy City.'

Waldemar, whose curiosity had led him towards the place where Ivanhoe had fallen to the ground, now returned. 'The gallant,' said he, 'is likely to give your Highness little disturbance, and to leave Front-de-Bœuf in the quiet possession of his gains; he is severely wounded.'

'Whatever becomes of him,' said Prince John, 'he is victor of the day; and were he tenfold our enemy, or the devoted friend of our brother, which is perhaps the same, his wounds must be looked to; our own physician shall attend him.'

A stern smile curled the Prince's lip as he spoke. Waldemar Fitzurse hastened to reply that Ivanhoe was already removed from the lists, and in the custody of his friends.

'I was somewhat afflicted,' he said, 'to see the grief of the Queen of Love and Beauty, whose sovereignty of a day this event has changed into mourning. I am not a man to be moved by a woman's lament for her lover, but this same Lady Rowena suppressed her sorrow with such dignity of manner that it could only be discovered by her folded hands and her tearless eye, which trembled as it remained fixed on the lifeless form before her.'

'Who is this Lady Rowena,' said Prince John, 'of whom we have heard so much?'

'A Saxon heiress of large possessions,' replied the Prior Aymer; 'a rose of loveliness, and a jewel of wealth; the fairest among a thousand, a bundle of myrrh, and a cluster of camphire.'

'We shall cheer her sorrows,' said Prince John, 'and amend her blood, by wedding her to a Norman. She seems a minor.

and must therefore be at our royal disposal in marriage. How sayest thou, De Bracy? What thinkest thou of gaining fair lands and livings, by wedding a Saxon, after the fashion of the followers of the Conqueror?

'If the lands are to my liking, my lord,' answered De Bracy, 'it will be hard to displease me with a bride; and deeply will I hold myself bound to your Highness for a good deed, which will fulfil all promises made in favour of your servant and vassal.'

'We will not forget it,' said Prince John; 'and that we may instantly go to work, command our seneschal presently to order the attendance of the Lady Rowena and her company — that is, the rude churl her guardian, and the Saxon ox whom the Black Knight struck down in the tournament — upon this evening's banquet. De Bigot,' he added to his seneschal, 'thou wilt word this our second summons so courteously as to gratify the pride of these Saxons, and make it impossible for them again to refuse; although, by the bones of Becket, courtesy to them is casting pearls before swine.'

Prince John had proceeded thus far, and was about to give the signal for retiring from the lists, when a small billet was put into his hand.

'From whence?' said Prince John, looking at the person by whom it was delivered.

'From foreign parts, my lord, but from whence I know not,' replied his attendant. 'A Frenchman brought it hither, who said he had ridden night and day to put it into the hands of your Highness.'

The Prince looked narrowly at the superscription, and then at the seal, placed so as to secure the floss-silk with which the billet was surrounded, and which bore the impression of three fleurs-de-lis. John then opened the billet with apparent agitation, which visibly and greatly increased when he had perused the contents, which were expressed in these words —

'Take heed to yourself, for the Devil is unchained!'

The Prince turned as pale as death, looked first on the earth, and then to heaven, like a man who has received news that sentence of execution has been passed upon him. Recovering from the first effects of his surprise, he took Waldemar Fitzurse and De Bracy aside, and put the billet into their hands successively. 'It means,' he added, in a faltering voice, 'that my brother Richard has obtained his freedom.'

'This may be a false alarm or a forged letter,' said De Bracy.

'It is France's own hand and seal,' replied Prince John.

'It is time, then,' said Fitzurse, 'to draw our party to a head, either at York or some other central place. A few days later, and it will be indeed too late. Your Highness must break short this present mummary.'

'The yeomen and commons,' said De Bracy, 'must not be dismissed discontented, for lack of their share in the sports.'

'The day,' said Waldemar, 'is not yet very far spent; let the archers shoot a few rounds at the target, and the prize be adjudged. This will be an abundant fulfilment of the Prince's promises, so far as this herd of Saxon serfs is concerned.'

'I thank thee, Waldemar,' said the Prince; 'thou remindest me, too, that I have a debt to pay to that insolent peasant who yesterday insulted our person. Our banquet also shall go forward to-night as we proposed. Were this my last hour of power, it should be an hour sacred to revenge and to pleasure; let new cares come with to-morrow's new day.'

The sound of the trumpets soon recalled those spectators who had already begun to leave the field; and proclamation was made that Prince John, suddenly called by high and peremptory public duties, held himself obliged to discontinue the entertainments of to-morrow's festival; nevertheless, that, unwilling so many good yeomen should depart without a trial of skill, he was pleased to appoint them, before leaving the ground, presently to execute the competition of archery intended for the morrow. To the best archer a prize was to be awarded, being a bugle-horn, mounted with silver, and a silken baldric richly ornamented with a medallion of Saint Hubert, the patron of silvan sport.

More than thirty yeomen at first presented themselves as competitors, several of whom were rangers and under-keepers in the royal forests of Needwood and Charnwood. When, however, the archers understood with whom they were to be matched, upwards of twenty withdrew themselves from the contest, unwilling to encounter the dishonour of almost certain defeat. For in those days the skill of each celebrated marksman was as well known for many miles round him as the qualities of a horse trained at Newmarket are familiar to those who frequent that well-known meeting.

The diminished list of competitors for silvan fame still amounted to eight. Prince John stepped from his royal seat to view more nearly the persons of these chosen yeomen, several of whom wore the royal livery. Having satisfied his curiosity by this investigation, he looked for the object of his resentment,

whom he observed standing on the same spot, and with the same composed countenance which he had exhibited upon the preceding day.

'Fellow,' said Prince John, 'I guessed by thy insolent babble thou wert no true lover of the long-bow, and I see thou darest not adventure thy skill among such merry men as stand yonder.'

'Under favour, sir,' replied the yeoman, 'I have another reason for refraining to shoot, besides the fearing discomfiture and disgrace.'

'And what is thy other reason?' said Prince John, who, for some cause which perhaps he could not himself have explained, felt a painful curiosity respecting this individual.

'Because,' replied the woodsman, 'I know not if these yeomen and I are used to shoot at the same marks; and because, moreover, I know not how your Grace might relish the winning of a third prize by one who has unwittingly fallen under your displeasure.'

Prince John coloured as he put the question, 'What is thy name, yeoman?'

'Locksley,' answered the yeoman.

'Then, Locksley,' said Prince John, 'thou shalt shoot in thy turn, when these yeomen have displayed their skill. If thou carriest the prize, I will add to it twenty nobles; but if thou locest it, thou shalt be stript of thy Lincoln green and scourged out of the lists with bowstrings, for a wordy and insolent braggart.'

'And how if I refuse to shoot on such a wager?' said the yeoman. 'Your Grace's power, supported, as it is, by so many men-at-arms, may indeed easily strip and scourge me, but cannot compel me to bend or to draw my bow.'

'If thou refusest my fair proffer,' said the Prince, 'the provost of the lists shall cut thy bowstring, break thy bow and arrows, and expel thee from the presence as a faint-hearted craven.'

'This is no fair chance you put on me, proud Prince,' said the yeoman, 'to compel me to peril myself against the best archers of Leicester and Staffordshire, under the penalty of infamy if they should overshoot me. Nevertheless, I will obey your pleasure.'

'Look to him close, men-at-arms,' said Prince John, 'his heart is sinking; I am jealous lest he attempt to escape the trial. And do you, good fellows, shoot boldly round; a buck

and a butt of wine are ready for your refreshment in yonder tent, when the prize is won.

A target was placed at the upper end of the southern avenue which led to the lists. The contending archers took their station in turn, at the bottom of the southern access; the distance between that station and the mark allowing full distance for what was called a shot at rovers. The archers having previously determined by lot their order of precedence, were to shoot each three shafts in succession. The sports were regulated by an officer of inferior rank, termed the provost of the games; for the high rank of the marshals of the lists would have been held degraded had they condescended to superintend the sports of the yeomanry.

One by one the archers, stepping forward, delivered their shafts yeomanlike and bravely. Of twenty-four arrows shot in succession, ten were fixed in the target, and the others ranged so near it that, considering the distance of the mark, it was accounted good archery. Of the ten shafts which hit the target, two within the inner ring were shot by Hubert, a forester in the service of Malvoisin, who was accordingly pronounced victorious.

'Now, Locksley,' said Prince John to the bold yeoman, with a bitter smile, 'wilt thou try conclusions with Hubert, or wilt thou yield up bow, baldric, and quiver to the provost of the sports?'

'Sith it be no better,' said Locksley, 'I am content to try my fortune; on condition that when I have shot two shafts at yonder mark of Hubert's, he shall be bound to shoot one at that which I shall propose.'

'That is but fair,' answered Prince John, 'and it shall not be refused thee. If thou dost beat this braggart, Hubert, I will fill the bugle with silver pennies for thee.'

'A man can do but his best,' answered Hubert; 'but my grandsire drew a good long bow at Hastings, and I trust not to dishonour his memory.'

The former target was now removed, and a fresh one of the same size placed in its room. Hubert, who, as victor in the first trial of skill, had the right to shoot first, took his aim with great deliberation, long measuring the distance with his eye, while he held in his hand his bended bow, with the arrow placed on the string. At length he made a step forward, and raising the bow at the full stretch of his left arm, till the centre or grasping-place was nigh level with his face, he drew his bow.

string to his ear. The arrow whistled through the air, and lighted within the inner ring of the target, but not exactly in the centre.

'You have not allowed for the wind, Hubert,' said his antagonist, bending his bow, 'or that had been a better shot.'

So saying, and without showing the least anxiety to pause upon his aim, Locksley stepped to the appointed station, and shot his arrow as carelessly in appearance as if he had not even looked at the mark. He was speaking almost at the instant that the shaft left the bowstring, yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer to the white spot which marked the centre than that of Hubert.

'By the light of Heaven!' said Prince John to Hubert, 'an thou suffer that runaway knave to overcome thee, thou art worthy of the gallows!'

Hubert had but one set speech for all occasions. 'An your Highness were to hang me,' he said, 'a man can but do his best. Nevertheless, my grandsire drew a good bow —'

'The foul fiend on thy grandsire and all his generation!' interrupted John. 'Shoot, knave, and shoot thy best, or it shall be worse for thee!'

Thus exhorted, Hubert resumed his place, and not neglecting the caution which he had received from his adversary, he made the necessary allowance for a very light air of wind which had just arisen, and shot so successfully that his arrow alighted in the very centre of the target.

'A Hubert! a Hubert!' shouted the populace, more interested in a known person than in a stranger. 'In the clout! — in the clout! a Hubert for ever!'

'Thou canst not mend that shot, Locksley,' said the Prince, with an insulting smile.

'I will notch his shaft for him, however,' replied Locksley.

And letting fly his arrow with a little more precaution than before, it lighted right upon that of his competitor, which it split to shivers. The people who stood around were so astonished at his wonderful dexterity that they could not even give vent to their surprise in their usual clamour. 'This must be the devil, and no man of flesh and blood,' whispered the yeomen to each other; 'such archery was never seen since a bow was first bent in Britain.'

'And now,' said Locksley, 'I will crave your Grace's permission to plant such a mark as is used in the North Country;

and welcome every brave yeoman who shall try a shot at it to win a smile from the bonny lass he loves best.'

He then turned to leave the lists. 'Let your guards attend me,' he said, 'if you please; I go but to cut a rod from the next willow-bush.'

Prince John made a signal that some attendants should follow him in case of his escape; but the cry of 'Shame! shame!' which burst from the multitude induced him to alter his ungenerous purpose.

Locksley returned almost instantly with a willow wand about six feet in length, perfectly straight, and rather thicker than a man's thumb. He began to peel this with great composure, observing at the same time that to ask a good woodsman to shoot at a target so broad as had hitherto been used was to put shame upon his skill. 'For his own part,' he said, 'and in the land where he was bred, men would as soon take for their mark King Arthur's round table, which held sixty knights around it. A child of seven years old,' he said, 'might hit yonder target with a headless shaft; but,' added he, walking deliberately to the other end of the lists, and sticking the willow wand upright in the ground, 'he that hits that rod at fivescore yards, I call him an archer fit to bear both bow and quiver before a king, an it were the stout King Richard himself.'

'My grandsire,' said Hubert, 'drew a good bow at the battle of Hastings, and never shot at such a mark in his life — and neither will I. If this yeoman can cleave that rod, I give him the bucklers; or rather, I yield to the devil that is in his jerkin, and not to any human skill; a man can but do his best, and I will not shoot where I am sure to miss. I might as well shoot at the edge of our parson's whittle, or at a wheat straw, or at a sunbeam, as at a twinkling white streak which I can hardly see.'

'Cowardly dog!' said Prince John. 'Sirrah Locksley, do thou shoot; but if thou hittest such a mark, I will say thou art the first man ever did so. Howe'er it be, thou shalt not crow over us with a mere show of superior skill.'

'I will do my best, as Hubert says,' answered Locksley; 'no man can do more.'

So saying, he again bent his bow, but on the present occasion looked with attention to his weapon, and changed the string, which he thought was no longer truly round, having been a little frayed by the two former shots. He then took his aim with some deliberation, and the multitude awaited the event

in breathless silence. The archer vindicated their opinion of his skill: his arrow split the willow rod against which it was aimed. A jubilee of acclamations followed; and even Prince John, in admiration of Locksley's skill, lost for an instant his dislike to his person. 'These twenty nobles,' he said, 'which, with the bugle, thou hast fairly won, are thine own; we will make them fifty if thou wilt take livery and service with us as a yeoman of our body-guard, and be near to our person. For never did so strong a hand bend a bow or so true an eye direct a shaft.'

'Pardon me, noble Prince,' said Locksley; 'but I have vowed that, if ever I take service, it should be with your royal brother King Richard. These twenty nobles I leave to Hubert, who has this day drawn as brave a bow as his grandsire did at Hastings. Had his modesty not refused the trial, he would have hit the wand as well as I.'

Hubert shook his head as he received with reluctance the bounty of the stranger; and Locksley, anxious to escape further observation, mixed with the crowd, and was seen no more.

The victorious archer would not perhaps have escaped John's attention so easily, had not that Prince had other subjects of anxious and more important meditation pressing upon his mind at that instant. He called upon his chamberlain as he gave the signal for retiring from the lists, and commanded him instantly to gallop to Ashby and seek out Isaac the Jew. 'Tell the dog,' he said, 'to send me, before sundown, two thousand crowns. He knows the security; but thou mayst show him this ring for a token. The rest of the money must be paid at York within six days. If he neglects, I will have the unbelieving villain's head. Look that thou pass him not on the way; for the circumcised slave was displaying his stolen finery amongst us.'

So saying, the Prince resumed his horse, and returned to Ashby, the whole crowd breaking up and dispersing upon his retreat.

CHAPTER XIV

In rough magnificence array'd,
When ancient chivalry display'd
The pomp of her heroic games,
And crested chiefs and tissued dames
Assembled, at the clarion's call,
In some proud castle's high arch'd hall.

WARTON.

PRINCE JOHN held his high festival in the Castle of Ashby. This was not the same building of which the stately ruins still interest the traveller, and which was erected at a later period by the Lord Hastings, High Chamberlain of England, one of the first victims of the tyranny of Richard the Third, and yet better known as one of Shakespeare's characters than by his historical fame. The castle and town of Ashby, at this time, belonged to Roger de Quiney, Earl of Winchester, who, during the period of our history, was absent in the Holy Land. Prince John, in the meanwhile, occupied his castle, and disposed of his domains without scruple; and seeking at present to dazzle men's eyes by his hospitality and magnificence, had given orders for great preparations, in order to render the banquet as splendid as possible.

The purveyors of the Prince, who exercised on this and other occasions the full authority of royalty, had swept the country of all that could be collected which was esteemed fit for their master's table. Guests also were invited in great numbers; and in the necessity in which he then found himself of court- ing popularity, Prince John had extended his invitation to a few distinguished Saxon and Danish families, as well as to the Norman nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood. However despised and degraded on ordinary occasions, the great numbers of the Anglo-Saxons must necessarily render them formidable in the civil commotions which seemed approaching, and it was an obvious point of policy to secure popularity with their leaders.

It was accordingly the Prince's intention, which he for some time maintained, to treat these unwonted guests with a courtesy to which they had been little accustomed. But although no man with less scruple made his ordinary habits and feelings bend to his interest, it was the misfortune of this Prince that his levity and petulance were perpetually breaking out, and undoing all that had been gained by his previous dissimulation.

Of this fickle temper he gave a memorable example in Ireland, when sent thither by his father, Henry the Second, with the purpose of buying golden opinions of the inhabitants of that new and important acquisition to the English crown. Upon this occasion the Irish chieftains contended which should first offer to the young Prince their loyal homage and the kiss of peace. But, instead of receiving their salutations with courtesy, John and his petulant attendants could not resist the temptation of pulling the long beards of the Irish chieftains — a conduct which, as might have been expected, was highly resented by these insulted dignitaries, and produced fatal consequences to the English domination in Ireland. It is necessary to keep these inconsistencies of John's character in view, that the reader may understand his conduct during the present evening.

In execution of the resolution which he had formed during his cooler moments, Prince John received Cedric and Athelstane with distinguished courtesy, and expressed his disappointment, without resentment, when the indisposition of Rowena was alleged by the former as a reason for her not attending upon his gracious summons. Cedric and Athelstane were both dressed in the ancient Saxon garb, which, although not unhandsome in itself, and in the present instance composed of costly materials, was so remote in shape and appearance from that of the other guests that Prince John took great credit to himself with Waldemar Fitzurse for refraining from laughter at a sight which the fashion of the day rendered ridiculous. Yet, in the eye of sober judgment, the short close tunic and long mantle of the Saxons was a more graceful, as well as a more convenient, dress than the garb of the Normans, whose under-garment was a long doublet, so loose as to resemble a shirt or waggoner's frock, covered by a cloak of scanty dimensions, neither fit to defend the wearer from cold nor from rain, and the only purpose of which appeared to be to display as much fur, embroidery, and jewellery work as the ingenuity of the tailor could contrive to lay upon it. The Emperor Charlemagne, in whose reign they were first introduced, seems to have been very sensible of the

inconveniences arising from the fashion of this garment. 'In Heaven's name,' said he, 'to what purpose serve these abridged cloaks? If we are in bed they are no cover, on horseback they are no protection from the wind and rain, and when seated they do not guard our legs from the damp or the frost.'

Nevertheless, spite of this imperial objurgation, the short cloaks continued in fashion down to the time of which we treat, and particularly among the princes of the house of Anjou. They were therefore in universal use among Prince John's courtiers; and the long mantle, which formed the upper garment of the Saxons, was held in proportional derision.

The guests were seated at a table which groaned under the quantity of good cheer. The numerous cooks who attended on the Prince's progress, having exerted all their art in varying the forms in which the ordinary provisions were served up, had succeeded almost as well as the modern professors of the culinary art in rendering them perfectly unlike their natural appearance. Besides these dishes of domestic origin, there were various delicacies brought from foreign parts, and a quantity of rich pastry, as well as of the simnel bread and wastel cakes, which were only used at the tables of the highest nobility. The banquet was crowned with the richest wines, both foreign and domestic.

But, though luxurious, the Norman nobles were not, generally speaking, an intemperate race. While indulging themselves in the pleasures of the table, they aimed at delicacy, but avoided excess, and were apt to attribute gluttony and drunkenness to the vanquished Saxons, as vices peculiar to their inferior station. Prince John, indeed, and those who courted his pleasure by imitating his foibles, were apt to indulge to excess in the pleasures of the trencher and the goblet; and indeed it is well known that his death was occasioned by a surfeit upon peaches and new ale. His conduct, however, was an exception to the general manners of his countrymen.

With sly gravity, interrupted only by private signs to each other, the Norman knights and nobles beheld the ruder demeanour of Athelstane and Cedric at a banquet to the form and fashion of which they were unaccustomed. And while their manners were thus the subject of sarcastic observation, the untaught Saxons unwittingly transgressed several of the arbitrary rules established for the regulation of society. Now, it is well known that a man may with more impunity be guilty

of an actual breach either of real good breeding or of good morals, than appear ignorant of the most minute point of fashionable etiquette. Thus Cedric, who dried his hands with a towel, instead of suffering the moisture to exhale by waving them gracefully in the air, incurred more ridicule than his companion Athelstane, when he swallowed to his own single share the whole of a large pasty composed of the most exquisite foreign delicacies, and termed at that time a 'karum pie.' When, however, it was discovered, by a serious cross-examination, that the thane of Coningsburgh — or franklin, as the Normans termed him — had no idea what he had been devouring, and that he had taken the contents of the 'karum pie' for larks and pigeons, whereas they were in fact beccaficoes and nightingales, his ignorance brought him in for an ample share of the ridicule which would have been more justly bestowed on his gluttony.

The long feast had at length its end; and, while the goblet circulated freely, men talked of the feats of the preceding tournament — of the unknown victor in the archery games, of the Black Knight, whose self-denial had induced him to withdraw from the honours he had won, and of the gallant Ivanhoe, who had so dearly bought the honours of the day. The topics were treated with military frankness, and the jest and laugh went round the hall. The brow of Prince John alone was overclouded during these discussions; some overpowering care seemed agitating his mind, and it was only when he received occasional hints from his attendants that he seemed to take interest in what was passing around him. On such occasions he would start up, quaff a cup of wine as if to raise his spirits, and then mingle in the conversation by some observation made abruptly or at random.

'We drink this beaker,' said he, 'to the health of Wilfred of Ivanhoe, champion of this passage of arms, and grieve that his wound renders him absent from our board. Let all fill to the pledge, and especially Cedric of Rotherwood, the worthy father of a son so promising.'

'No, my lord,' replied Cedric, standing up, and placing on the table his untasted cup, 'I yield not the name of son to the disobedient youth who at once despises my commands and relinquishes the manners and customs of his fathers.'

'T is impossible,' cried Prince John, with well-feigned astonishment, 'that so gallant a knight should be an unworthy or disobedient son!'

'Yet, my lord,' answered Cedric, 'so it is with this Wilfred. He left my homely dwelling to mingle with the gay nobility of your brother's court, where he learned to do those tricks of horsemanship which you prize so highly. He left it contrary to my wish and command; and in the days of Alfred that would have been termed disobedience — ay, and a crime severely punishable.'

'Alas!' replied Prince John, with a deep sigh of affected sympathy, 'since your son was a follower of my unhappy brother, it need not be inquired where or from whom he learned the lesson of filial disobedience.'

Thus spake Prince John, wilfully forgetting that, of all the sons of Henry the Second, though no one was free from the charge, he himself had been most distinguished for rebellion and ingratitude to his father.

'I think,' said he, after a moment's pause, 'that my brother proposed to confer upon his favourite the rich manor of Ivanhoe.'

'He did endow him with it,' answered Cedric; 'nor is it my least quarrel with my son that he stooped to hold, as a feudal vassal, the very domain which his fathers possessed in free and independent right.'

'We shall then have your willing sanction, good Cedric,' said Prince John, 'to confer this fief upon a person whose dignity will not be diminished by holding land of the British crown. Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf,' he said, turning towards that baron, 'I trust you will so keep the goodly barony of Ivanhoe that Sir Wilfred shall not incur his father's displeasure by again entering upon that fief.'

'By St. Anthony!' answered the black-browed giant, 'I will consent that your Highness shall hold me a Saxon, if either Cedric or Wilfred, or the best that ever bore English blood, shall wrench from me the gift with which your Highness has graced me.'

'Whoever shall call thee Saxon, Sir Baron,' replied Cedric, offended at a mode of expression by which the Normans frequently expressed their habitual contempt of the English, 'will do thee an honour as great as it is undeserved.'

Front-de-Bœuf would have replied, but Prince John's petulance and levity got the start.

'Assuredly,' said he, 'my lords, the noble Cedric speaks truth; and his race may claim precedence over us as much in the length of their pedigrees as in the longitude of their cloaks.'

'They go before us indeed in the field, as deer before dogs,' said Malvoisin.

'And with good right may they go before us; forget not,' said Prior Aymer, 'the superior decency and decorum of their manners.'

'Their singular abstemiousness and temperance,' said De Bracy, forgetting the plan which promised him a Saxon bride.

'Together with the courage and conduct,' said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, 'by which they distinguished themselves at Hastings and elsewhere.'

While, with smooth and smiling cheek, the courtiers, each in turn, followed their Prince's example, and aimed a shaft of ridicule at Cedric, the face of the Saxon became inflamed with passion, and he glanced his eyes fiercely from one to another, as if the quick succession of so many injuries had prevented his replying to them in turn; or, like a baited bull, who, surrounded by his tormentors, is at a loss to choose from among them the immediate object of his revenge. At length he spoke, in a voice half-choked with passion; and, addressing himself to Prince John as the head and front of the offence which he had received, 'Whatever,' he said, 'have been the follies and vices of our race, a Saxon would have been held *nidering*¹ (the most emphatic term for abject worthlessness) who should in his own hall, and while his own wine-cup passed, have treated, or suffered to be treated, an unoffending guest as your Highness has this day beheld me used; and whatever was the misfortune of our fathers on the field of Hastings, those may at least be silent (here he looked at Front-de-Bœuf and the Templar) who have within these few hours once and again lost saddle and stirrup before the lance of a Saxon.'

'By my faith, a biting jest!' said Prince John. 'How like you it, sirs? Our Saxon subjects rise in spirit and courage, become shrewd in wit and bold in bearing, in these unsettled times. What say ye, my lords? By this good light, I hold it best to take our galleys and return to Normandy in time.'

'For fear of the Saxons?' said De Bracy, laughing. 'We should need no weapons but our hunting spears to bring these boars to bay.'

'A truce with your raillery, Sir Knights,' said Fitzurse; 'and it were well,' he added, addressing the Prince, 'that your Highness should assure the worthy Cedric there is no insult

¹ See Note 7.

intended him by jests which must sound but harshly in the ear of a stranger.

'Insult!' answered Prince John, resuming his courtesy of demeanour; 'I trust it will not be thought that I could mean or permit any to be offered in my presence. Here! I fill my cup to Cedric himself, since he refuses to pledge his son's health.'

The cup went round amid the well-dissembled applause of the courtiers, which, however, failed to make the impression on the mind of the Saxon that had been designed. He was not naturally acute of perception, but those too much undervalued his understanding who deemed that this flattering compliment would obliterate the sense of the prior insult. He was silent, however, when the royal pledge again passed round, 'To Sir Athelstane of Coningsburgh.'

The knight made his obeisance, and showed his sense of the honour by draining a huge goblet in answer to it.

'And now, sirs,' said Prince John, who began to be warmed with the wine which he had drank, 'having done justice to our Saxon guests, we will pray of them some requital to our courtesy. Worthy thane,' he continued, addressing Cedric, 'may we pray you to name to us some Norman whose mention may least sully your mouth, and to wash down with a goblet of wine all bitterness which the sound may leave behind it?'

Fitzurse arose while Prince John spoke, and gliding behind the seat of the Saxon, whispered to him not to omit the opportunity of putting an end to unkindness betwixt the two races by naming Prince John. The Saxon replied not to this politic insinuation, but, rising up, and filling his cup to the brim, he addressed Prince John in these words: 'Your Highness has required that I should name a Norman deserving to be remembered at our banquet. This, perchance, is a hard task, since it calls on the slave to sing the praises of the master — upon the vanquished, while pressed by all the evils of conquest, to sing the praises of the conqueror. Yet I *will* name a Norman — the first in arms and in place — the best and noblest of his race. And the lips that shall refuse to pledge me to his well-earned fame, I term false and dishonoured, and will so maintain them with my life. I quaff this goblet to the health of Richard the Lion-hearted!'

Prince John, who had expected that his own name would have closed the Saxon's speech, started when that of his injured brother was so unexpectedly introduced. He raised mechanic-

ally the wine-cup to his lips, then instantly set it down, to view the demeanour of the company at this unexpected proposal, which many of them felt it as unsafe to oppose as to comply with. Some of them, ancient and experienced courtiers, closely imitated the example of the Prince himself, raising the goblet to their lips, and again replacing it before them. There were many who, with a more generous feeling, exclaimed, 'Long live King Richard! and may he be speedily restored to us!' And some few, among whom were Front-de-Bœuf and the Templar, in sullen disdain suffered their goblets to stand untasted before them. But no man ventured directly to gainsay a pledge filled to the health of the reigning monarch.

Having enjoyed his triumph for about a minute, Cedric said to his companion, 'Up, noble Athelstane! we have remained here long enough, since we have requited the hospitable courtesy of Prince John's banquet. Those who wish to know further of our rude Saxon manners must henceforth seek us in the homes of our fathers, since we have seen enough of royal banquets and enough of Norman courtesy.'

So saying, he arose and left the banqueting-room, followed by Athelstane, and by several other guests, who, partaking of the Saxon lineage, held themselves insulted by the sarcasms of Prince John and his courtiers.

'By the bones of St. Thomas,' said Prince John, as they retreated, 'the Saxon churls have borne off the best of the day, and have retreated with triumph!'

'*Conclamatum est, poculatum est,*' said Prior Aymer: 'we have drunk and we have shouted, it were time we left our wine flagons.'

'The monk hath some fair penitent to shrive to-night, that he is in such a hurry to depart,' said De Bracy.

'Not so, Sir Knight,' replied the Abbot; 'but I must move several miles forward this evening upon my homeward journey.'

'They are breaking up,' said the Prince in a whisper to Fitzurse; 'their fears anticipate the event, and this coward Prior is the first to shrink from me.'

'Fear not, my lord,' said Waldemar; 'I will show him such reasons as shall induce him to join us when we hold our meeting at York. Sir Prior,' he said, 'I must speak with you in private before you mount your palfrey.'

The other guests were now fast dispersing, with the exception of those immediately attached to Prince John's faction and his retinue.

'This, then, is the result of your advice,' said the Prince, turning an angry countenance upon Fitzurse; 'that I should be bearded at my own board by a drunken Saxon churl, and that, on the mere sound of my brother's name, men should fall off from me as if I had the leprosy?'

'Have patience, sir,' replied his counsellor; 'I might retort your accusation, and blame the inconsiderate levity which foiled my design, and misled your own better judgment. But this is no time for recrimination. De Bracy and I will instantly go among these shuffling cowards and convince them they have gone too far to recede.'

'It will be in vain,' said Prince John, pacing the apartment with disordered steps, and expressing himself with an agitation to which the wine he had drank partly contributed — 'it will be in vain; they have seen the handwriting on the wall — they have marked the paw of the lion in the sand — they have heard his approaching roar shake the wood; nothing will reanimate their courage.'

'Would to God,' said Fitzurse to De Bracy, 'that aught could reanimate his own! His brother's very name is an ague to him. Unhappy are the counsellors of a prince who wants fortitude and perseverance alike in good and in evil!'

CHAPTER XV

And yet he thinks — ha, ha, ha, ha — he thinks
I am the tool and servant of his will.
Well, let it be ; through all the maze of trouble
His plots and base oppression must create,
I'll shape myself a way to higher things,
And who will say 't is wrong ?

Basil, a Tragedy.

NO spider ever took more pains to repair the shattered meshes of his web than did Waldemar Fitzurse to reunite and combine the scattered members of Prince John's cabal. Few of these were attached to him from inclination, and none from personal regard. It was therefore necessary that Fitzurse should open to them new prospects of advantage, and remind them of those which they at present enjoyed. To the young and wild nobles he held out the prospect of unpunished license and uncontrolled revelry, to the ambitious that of power, and to the covetous that of increased wealth and extended domains. The leaders of the mercenaries received a donation in gold — an argument the most persuasive to their minds, and without which all others would have proved in vain. Promises were still more liberally distributed than money by this active agent ; and, in fine, nothing was left undone that could determine the wavering or animate the disheartened. The return of King Richard he spoke of as an event altogether beyond the reach of probability ; yet, when he observed, from the doubtful looks and uncertain answers which he received, that this was the apprehension by which the minds of his accomplices were most haunted, he boldly treated that event, should it really take place, as one which ought not to alter their political calculations.

'If Richard returns,' said Fitzurse, 'he returns to enrich his needy and impoverished crusaders at the expense of those who did not follow him to the Holy Land. He returns to call to a fearful reckoning those who, during his absence, have done

ought that can be construed offence or encroachment upon either the laws of the land or the privileges of the crown. He returns to avenge upon the Orders of the Temple and the Hospital the preference which they showed to Philip of France during the wars in the Holy Land. He returns, in fine, to punish as a rebel every adherent of his brother Prince John. Are ye afraid of his power?' continued the artful confidant of that Prince; 'we acknowledge him a strong and valiant knight; but these are not the days of King Arthur, when a champion could encounter an army. If Richard indeed comes back, it must be alone, unfollowed, unfriended. The bones of his gallant army have whitened the sands of Palestine. The few of his followers who have returned have straggled hither like this Wilfred of Ivanhoe, beggared and broken men. And what talk ye of Richard's right of birth?' he proceeded, in answer to those who objected scruples on that head. 'Is Richard's title of primogeniture more decidedly certain than that of Duke Robert of Normandy, the Conqueror's eldest son? And yet William the Red and Henry, his second and third brothers, were successively preferred to him by the voice of the nation. Robert had every merit which can be pleaded for Richard: he was a bold knight, a good leader, generous to his friends and to the church, and, to crown the whole, a crusader and a conqueror of the Holy Sepulchre; and yet he died a blind and miserable prisoner in the Castle of Cardiff, because he opposed himself to the will of the people, who chose that he should not rule over them. It is our right,' he said, 'to choose from the blood royal the prince who is best qualified to hold the supreme power — that is,' said he, correcting himself, 'him whose election will best promote the interests of the nobility. In personal qualifications,' he added, 'it was possible that Prince John might be inferior to his brother Richard; but when it was considered that the latter returned with the sword of vengeance in his hand, while the former held out rewards, immunities, privileges, wealth, and honours, it could not be doubted which was the king whom in wisdom the nobility were called on to support.'

These, and many more arguments, some adapted to the peculiar circumstances of those whom he addressed, had the expected weight with the nobles of Prince John's faction. Most of them consented to attend the proposed meeting at York, for the purpose of making general arrangements for placing the crown upon the head of Prince John.

It was late at night when, worn out and exhausted with his various exertions, however gratified with the result, Fitzurse, returning to the Castle of Ashby, met with De Bracy, who had exchanged his banqueting garments for a short green kirtle, with hose of the same cloth and colour, a leathern cap or head-piece, a short sword, a horn slung over his shoulder, a long-bow in his hand, and a bundle of arrows stuck in his belt. Had Fitzurse met this figure in an outer apartment, he would have passed him without notice, as one of the yeomen of the guard; but finding him in the inner hall, he looked at him with more attention, and recognised the Norman knight in the dress of an English yeoman.

'What mummerly is this, De Bracy?' said Fitzurse, somewhat angrily; 'is this a time for Christmas gambols and quaint maskings, when the fate of our master, Prince John, is on the very verge of decision? Why hast thou not been, like me, among these heartless cravens whom the very name of King Richard terrifies, as it is said to do the children of the Saracens?'

'I have been attending to mine own business,' answered De Bracy, calmly, 'as you, Fitzurse, have been minding yours.'

'I minding mine own business!' echoed Waldemar; 'I have been engaged in that of Prince John, our joint patron.'

'As if thou hadst any other reason for that, Waldemar,' said De Bracy, 'than the promotion of thine own individual interest? Come, Fitzurse, we know each other: ambition is thy pursuit, pleasure is mine, and they become our different ages. Of Prince John thou thinkest as I do — that he is too weak to be a determined monarch, too tyrannical to be an easy monarch, too insolent and presumptuous to be a popular monarch, and too fickle and timid to be long a monarch of any kind. But he is a monarch by whom Fitzurse and De Bracy hope to rise and thrive; and therefore you aid him with your policy, and I with the lances of my Free Companions.'

'A hopeful auxiliary,' said Fitzurse, impatiently, 'playing the fool in the very moment of utter necessity. What on earth dost thou purpose by this absurd disguise at a moment so urgent?'

'To get me a wife,' answered De Bracy, coolly, 'after the manner of the tribe of Benjamin.'

'The tribe of Benjamin!' said Fitzurse. 'I comprehend thee not.'

'Wert thou not in presence yestereven,' said De Bracy,

'when we heard the Prior Aymer tell us a tale in reply to the romance which was sung by the minstrel? He told how, long since in Palestine, a deadly feud arose between the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of the Israelitish nation; and how they cut to pieces wellnigh all the chivalry of that tribe; and how they swore by our blessed Lady that they would not permit those who remained to marry in their lineage; and how they became grieved for their vow, and sent to consult his holiness the Pope how they might be absolved from it; and how, by the advice of the Holy Father, the youth of the tribe of Benjamin carried off from a superb tournament all the ladies who were there present, and thus won them wives without the consent either of their brides or their brides' families.'

'I have heard the story,' said Fitzurse, 'though either the Prior or thou has made some singular alterations in date and circumstances.'

'I tell thee,' said De Bracy, 'that I mean to purvey me a wife after the fashion of the tribe of Benjamin; which is as much as to say, that in this same equipment I will fall upon that herd of Saxon bullocks who have this night left the castle, and carry off from them the lovely Rowena.'

'Art thou mad, De Bracy?' said Fitzurse. 'Bethink thee that, though the men be Saxons, they are rich and powerful, and regarded with the more respect by their countrymen that wealth and honour are but the lot of few of Saxon descent.'

'And should belong to none,' said De Bracy; 'the work of the Conquest should be completed.'

'This is no time for it at least,' said Fitzurse; 'the approaching crisis renders the favour of the multitude indispensable, and Prince John cannot refuse justice to any one who injures their favourites.'

'Let him grant it if he dare,' said De Bracy; 'he will soon see the difference betwixt the support of such a lusty lot of spears as mine and that of a heartless mob of Saxon churls. Yet I mean no immediate discovery of myself. Seem I not in this garb as bold a forester as ever blew horn? The blame of the violence shall rest with the outlaws of the Yorkshire forests. I have sure spies on the Saxons' motions. To-night they sleep in the convent of St. Wittol, or Withold, or whatever they call that churl of a Saxon saint, at Burton-on-Trent. Next day's march brings them within our reach, and, falcon-ways, we swoop on them at once. Presently after I will appear in mine own shape, play the courteous knight, rescue the unfortunate

and afflicted fair one from the hands of the rude ravishers, conduct her to Front-de-Beauf's castle, or to Normandy, if it should be necessary, and produce her not again to her kindred until she be the bride and dame of Maurice De Bracy.'

'A marvellously sage plan,' said Fitzurse, 'and, as I think, not entirely of thine own device. Come, be frank, De Bracy, who aided thee in the invention? and who is to assist in the execution? for, as I think, thine own bawd lies as far off as York.'

'Marry, if thou must needs know,' said De Bracy, 'it was the Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert that shaped out the enterprise, which the adventure of the men of Benjamin suggested to me. He is to aid me in the onslaught, and he and his followers will personate the outlaws, from whom my valorous arm is, after changing my garb, to rescue the lady.'

'By my halidome,' said Fitzurse, 'the plan was worthy of your united wisdom! and thy prudence, De Bracy, is most especially manifested in the project of leaving the lady in the hands of thy worthy confederate. Thou mayst, I think, succeed in taking her from her Saxon friends, but how thou wilt rescue her afterwards from the clutches of Bois-Guilbert seems considerably more doubtful. He is a falcon well accustomed to pounce on a partridge and to hold his prey fast.'

'He is a Templar,' said De Bracy, 'and cannot therefore rival me in my plan of wedding this heiress; and to attempt aught dishonourable against the intended bride of De Bracy—By Heaven! were he a whole chapter of his order in his single person, he dared not do me such an injury!'

'Then, since nought that I can say,' said Fitzurse, 'will put this folly from thy imagination, for well I know the obstinacy of thy disposition, at least waste as little time as possible; let not thy folly be lasting as well as untimely.'

'I tell thee,' answered De Bracy, 'that it will be the work of a few hours, and I shall be at York at the head of my daring and valorous fellows, as ready to support any bold design as thy policy can be to form one. But I hear my comrades assembling, and the steeds stamping and neighing in the outer court. Farewell. I go, like a true knight, to win the smiles of beauty.'

'Like a true knight!' repeated Fitzurse, looking after him; 'like a fool, I should say, or like a child, who will leave the most serious and needful occupation to chase the down of the thistle that drives past him. But it is with such tools that I

must work — and for whose advantage? For that of a Prince as unwise as he is profligate, and as likely to be an ungrateful master as he has already proved a rebellious son and an unnatural brother. But he — he too is but one of the tools with which I labour; and, proud as he is, should he presume to separate his interest from mine, this is a secret which he shall soon learn.

The meditations of the statesman were here interrupted by the voice of the Prince from an interior apartment calling out, 'Noble Waldemar Fitzurse!' and, with bonnet doffed, the future Chancellor, for to such high preferment did the wily Norman aspire, hastened to receive the orders of the future sovereign.

CHAPTER XVI

Far in a wild, unknown to public view,
From youth to age a reverend hermit grew ;
The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,
His food the fruits, his drink the crystal well ;
Remote from man, with God he pass'd his days,
Prayer all his business, all his pleasure praise.

PARNELL.

THE reader cannot have forgotten that the event of the tournament was decided by the exertions of an unknown knight, whom, on account of the passive and indifferent conduct which he had manifested on the former part of the day, the spectators had entitled *Le Noir Faîneant*. This knight had left the field abruptly when the victory was achieved ; and when he was called upon to receive the reward of his valour he was nowhere to be found. In the meantime, while summoned by heralds and by trumpets, the knight was holding his course northward, avoiding all frequented paths, and taking the shortest road through the woodlands. He paused for the night at a small hostelry lying out of the ordinary route, where, however, he obtained from a wandering minstrel news of the event of the tourney.

On the next morning the knight departed early, with the intention of making a long journey ; the condition of his horse, which he had carefully spared during the preceding morning, being such as enabled him to travel far without the necessity of much repose. Yet his purpose was baffled by the devious paths through which he rode, so that when evening closed upon him he only found himself on the frontiers of the West Riding of Yorkshire. By this time both horse and man required refreshment, and it became necessary, moreover, to look out for some place in which they might spend the night, which was now fast approaching.

The place where the traveller found himself seemed unpro-

pitious for obtaining either shelter or refreshment, and he was likely to be reduced to the usual expedient of knights errant, who, on such occasions, turned their horses to graze, and laid themselves down to meditate on their lady-mistress, with an oak-tree for a canopy. But the Black Knight either had no mistress to meditate upon, or, being as indifferent in love as he seemed to be in war, was not sufficiently occupied by passionate reflections upon her beauty and cruelty to be able to parry the effects of fatigue and hunger, and suffer love to act as a substitute for the solid comforts of a bed and supper. He felt dissatisfied, therefore, when, looking around, he found himself deeply involved in woods, through which indeed there were many open glades and some paths, but such as seemed only formed by the numerous herds of cattle which grazed in the forest, or by the animals of chase, and the hunters who made prey of them.

The sun, by which the knight had chiefly directed his course, had now sunk behind the Derbyshire hills on his left, and every effort which he might take to pursue his journey was as likely to lead him out of his road as to advance him on his route. After having in vain endeavoured to select the most beaten path, in hopes it might lead to the cottage of some herdsman or the silvan lodge of a forester, and having repeatedly found himself totally unable to determine on a choice, the knight resolved to trust to the sagacity of his horse, experience having on former occasions made him acquainted with the wonderful talent possessed by these animals for extricating themselves and their riders on such emergencies.

The good steed, grievously fatigued with so long a day's journey under a rider cased in mail, had no sooner found, by the slackened reins, that he was abandoned to his own guidance, than he seemed to assume new strength and spirit; and whereas formerly he had scarce replied to the spur otherwise than by a groan, he now, as if proud of the confidence reposed in him, pricked up his ears, and assumed, of his own accord, a more lively motion. The path which the animal adopted rather turned off from the course pursued by the knight during the day; but as the horse seemed confident in his choice, the rider abandoned himself to his discretion.

He was justified by the event, for the footpath soon after appeared a little wider and more worn, and the tinkle of a small bell gave the knight to understand that he was in the vicinity of some chapel or hermitage.

Accordingly, he soon reached an open plat of turf, on the opposite side of which a rock, rising abruptly from a gently sloping plain, offered its grey and weather-beaten front to the traveller. Ivy mantled its sides in some places, and in others oaks and holly bushes, whose roots found nourishment in the cliffs of the crag, waved over the precipices below, like the plumage of the warrior over his steel helmet, giving grace to that whose chief expression was terror. At the bottom of the rock, and leaning, as it were, against it, was constructed a rude hut, built chiefly of the trunks of trees felled in the neighbouring forest, and secured against the weather by having its crevices stuffed with moss mingled with clay. The stem of a young fir-tree lopped of its branches, with a piece of wood tied across near the top, was planted upright by the door, as a rude emblem of the holy cross. At a little distance on the right hand, a fountain of the purest water trickled out of the rock, and was received in a hollow stone, which labour had formed into a rustic basin. Escaping from thence, the stream murmured down the descent by a channel which its course had long worn, and so wandered through the little plain to lose itself in the neighbouring wood.

Beside this fountain were the ruins of a very small chapel, of which the roof had partly fallen in. The building, when entire, had never been above sixteen feet long by twelve feet in breadth, and the roof, low in proportion, rested upon four concentric arches which sprung from the four corners of the building, each supported upon a short and heavy pillar. The ribs of two of these arches remained, though the roof had fallen down betwixt them; over the others it remained entire. The entrance to this ancient place of devotion was under a very low round arch, ornamented by several courses of that zig-zag moulding, resembling sharks' teeth, which appears so often in the more ancient Saxon architecture. A belfry rose above the porch on four small pillars, within which hung the green and weather-beaten bell, the feeble sounds of which had been some time before heard by the Black Knight.

The whole peaceful and quiet scene lay glimmering in twilight before the eyes of the traveller, giving him good assurance of lodging for the night; since it was a special duty of those hermits who dwelt in the woods to exercise hospitality towards benighted or bewildered passengers.

Accordingly, the knight took no time to consider minutely the particulars which we have detailed, but thanking St. Julian,

the patron of travellers, who had sent him good harbourage, he leaped from his horse and assailed the door of the hermitage with the butt of his lance, in order to arouse attention and gain admittance.

It was some time before he obtained any answer, and the reply, when made, was unpropitious.

'Pass on, whosoever thou art,' was the answer given by a deep hoarse voice from within the hut, 'and disturb not the servant of God and St. Dunstan in his evening devotions.'

'Worthy father,' answered the knight, 'here is a poor wanderer bewildered in these woods, who gives thee the opportunity of exercising thy charity and hospitality.'

'Good brother,' replied the inhabitant of the hermitage, 'it has pleased Our Lady and St. Dunstan to direct me for the object of those virtues, instead of the exercise thereof. I have no provisions here which even a dog would share with me, and a horse of any tenderness of nurture would despise my couch; pass therefore on thy way, and God speed thee.'

'But how,' replied the knight, 'is it possible for me to find my way through such a wood as this, when darkness is coming on? I pray you, reverend father, as you are a Christian, to undo your door, and at least point out to me my road.'

'And I pray you, good Christian brother,' replied the anchorite, 'to disturb me no more. You have already interrupted one *pater*, two *aves*, and a *credo*, which I, miserable sinner that I am, should, according to my vow, have said before moonrise.'

'The road — the road!' vociferated the knight; 'give me directions for the road, if I am to expect no more from thee.'

'The road,' replied the hermit, 'is easy to hit. The path from the wood leads to a morass, and from thence to a ford, which, as the rains have abated, may now be passable. When thou hast crossed the ford, thou wilt take care of thy footing up the left bank, as it is somewhat precipitous, and the path, which hangs over the river, has lately, as I learn — for I seldom leave the duties of my chapel — given way in sundry places. Thou wilt then keep straight forward —'

'A broken path — a precipice — a ford — and a morass!' said the knight, interrupting him. 'Sir Hermit, if you were the holiest that ever wore beard or told bead, you shall scarce prevail on me to hold this road to-night. I tell thee, that thou, who livest by the charity of the country — ill deserved, as I doubt it is — hast no right to refuse shelter to the wayfarer

when in distress. Either open the door quickly, or, by the rood, I will beat it down and make entry for myself.'

'Friend wayfarer,' replied the hermit, 'be not importunate; if thou putttest me to use the carnal weapon in mine own defence, it will be e'en the worse for you.'

At this moment a distant noise of barking and growling, which the traveller had for some time heard, became extremely loud and furious, and made the knight suppose that the hermit, alarmed by his threat of making forcible entry, had called the dogs, who made this clamour to aid him in his defence, out of some inner recess in which they had been kennelled. Incensed at this preparation on the hermit's part for making good his inhospitable purpose, the knight struck the door so furiously with his foot that posts as well as staples shook with violence.

The anchorite, not caring again to expose his door to a similar shock, now called out aloud, 'Patience—patience; spare thy strength, good traveller, and I will presently undo the door, though, it may be, my doing so will be little to thy pleasure.'

The door accordingly was opened; and the hermit, a large, strong-built man, in his sackcloth gown and hood, girt with a rope of rushes, stood before the knight. He had in one hand a lighted torch, or link, and in the other a baton of crab-tree, so thick and heavy that it might well be termed a club. Two large shaggy dogs, half greyhound, half mastiff, stood ready to rush upon the traveller as soon as the door should be opened. But when the torch glanced upon the lofty crest and golden spurs of the knight who stood without, the hermit, altering probably his original intentions, repressed the rage of his auxiliaries, and, changing his tone to a sort of churlish courtesy, invited the knight to enter his hut, making excuse for his unwillingness to open his lodge after sunset, by alleging the multitude of robbers and outlaws who were abroad, and who gave no honour to Our Lady or St. Dunstan, nor to those holy men who spent life in their service.

'The poverty of your cell, good father,' said the knight, looking around him, and seeing nothing but a bed of leaves, a crucifix rudely carved in oak, a missal, with a rough-hewn table and two stools, and one or two clumsy articles of furniture—'the poverty of your cell should seem a sufficient defence against any risk of thieves, not to mention the aid of two trusty dogs, large and strong enough, I think, to pull down a stag, and, of course, to match with most men.'



THE BLACK KNIGHT DEMANDS ADMISSION AT THE HERMITAGE.



'The good keeper of the forest,' said the hermit, 'hath allowed me the use of these animals to protect my solitude until the times shall mend.'

Having said this, he fixed his torch in a twisted branch of iron which served for a candlestick; and placing the oaken trivet before the embers of the fire, which he refreshed with some dry wood, he placed a stool upon one side of the table, and beckoned to the knight to do the same upon the other.

They sat down, and gazed with great gravity at each other, each thinking in his heart that he had seldom seen a stronger or more athletic figure than was placed opposite to him.

'Reverend hermit,' said the knight, after looking long and fixedly at his host, 'were it not to interrupt your devout meditations, I would pray to know three things of your holiness; first, where I am to put my horse? secondly, what I can have for supper? thirdly, where I am to take up my couch for the night?'

'I will reply to you,' said the hermit, 'with my finger, it being against my rule to speak by words where signs can answer the purpose.' So saying, he pointed successively to two corners of the hut. 'Your stable,' said he, 'is there; your bed there; and,' reaching down a platter with two handfuls of parched pease upon it from the neighbouring shelf, and placing it upon the table, he added, 'your supper is here.'

The knight shrugged his shoulders, and leaving the hut, brought in his horse, which in the interim he had fastened to a tree, unsaddled him with much attention, and spread upon the steed's weary back his own mantle.

The hermit was apparently somewhat moved to compassion by the anxiety as well as address which the stranger displayed in tending his horse; for, muttering something about provender left for the keeper's palfrey, he dragged out of a recess a bundle of forage, which he spread before the knight's charger, and immediately afterwards shook down a quantity of dried fern in the corner which he had assigned for the rider's couch. The knight returned him thanks for his courtesy; and, this duty done, both resumed their seats by the table, whereon stood the trencher of pease placed between them. The hermit, after a long grace, which had once been Latin, but of which original language few traces remained, excepting here and there the long rolling termination of some word or phrase, set example to his guest by modestly putting into a very large mouth, furnished with teeth which might have ranked with

those of a boar both in sharpness and whiteness, some three or four dried pease, a miserable grist, as it seemed, for so large and able a mill.

The knight, in order to follow so laudable an example, laid aside his helmet, his corslet, and the greater part of his armour, and showed to the hermit a head thick-curved with yellow hair, high features, blue eyes, remarkably bright and sparkling, a mouth well formed, having an upper lip clothed with moustaches darker than his hair, and bearing altogether the look of a bold, daring, and enterprising man, with which his strong form well corresponded.

The hermit, as if wishing to answer to the confidence of his guest, threw back his cowl, and showed a round bullet head belonging to a man in the prime of life. His close-shaven crown, surrounded by a circle of stiff curled black hair, had something the appearance of a parish pinfold begirt by its high hedge. The features expressed nothing of monastic austerity or of ascetic privations; on the contrary, it was a bold bluff countenance, with broad black eyebrows, a well-turned forehead, and cheeks as round and vermilion as those of a trumpeter, from which descended a long and curly black beard. Such a visage, joined to the brawny form of the holy man, spoke rather of sirloins and haunches than of pease and pulse. This incongruity did not escape the guest. After he had with great difficulty accomplished the mastication of a mouthful of the dried pease, he found it absolutely necessary to request his pious entertainer to furnish him with some liquor; who replied to his request by placing before him a large can of the purest water from the fountain.

'It is from the well of St. Dunstan,' said he, 'in which, betwixt sun and sun, he baptised five hundred heathen Danes and Britons — blessed be his name!' And applying his black beard to the pitcher, he took a draught much more moderate in quantity than his encomium seemed to warrant.

'It seems to me, reverend father,' said the knight, 'that the small morsels which you eat, together with this holy but somewhat thin beverage, have thriven with you marvellously. You appear a man more fit to win the ram at a wrestling-match, or the ring at a bout at quarter-staff, or the bucklers at a sword-play, than to linger out your time in this desolate wilderness, saying masses, and living upon parched pease and cold water.'

'Sir Knight,' answered the hermit, 'your thoughts, like

those of the ignorant laity, are according to the flesh. It has pleased Our Lady and my patron saint to bless the pittance to which I restrain myself, even as the pulse and water were blessed to the children Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, who drank the same rather than defile themselves with the wine and meats which were appointed them by the King of the Saracens.'

'Holy father,' said the knight, 'upon whose countenance it hath pleased Heaven to work such a miracle, permit a sinful layman to crave thy name!'

'Thou mayst call me,' answered the hermit, 'the Clerk of Copmanhurst, for so I am termed in these parts. They add, it is true, the epithet holy, but I stand not upon that, as being unworthy of such addition. And now, valiant knight, may I pray ye for the name of my honourable guest?'

'Truly,' said the knight, 'Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst, men call me in these parts the Black Knight; many, sir, add to it the epithet of Sluggard, whereby I am no way ambitious to be distinguished.'

The hermit could scarcely forbear from smiling at his guest's reply.

'I see,' said he, 'Sir Sluggish Knight, that thou art a man of prudence and of counsel, and, moreover, I see that my poor monastic fare likes thee not, accustomed, perhaps, as thou hast been to the license of courts and camps, and the luxuries of cities; and now I bethink me, Sir Sluggard, that when the charitable keeper of this forest-walk left these dogs for my protection, and also those bundles of forage, he left me also some food, which, being unfit for my use, the very recollection of it had escaped me amid my more weighty meditations.'

'I dare be sworn he did so,' said the knight; 'I was convinced that there was better food in the cell, Holy Clerk, since you first doffed your cowl. Your keeper is ever a jovial fellow; and none who beheld thy grinders contending with these pease, and thy throat flooded with this ungenial element, could see thee doomed to such horse-provender and horse-beverage (pointing to the provisions upon the table), and refrain from mending thy cheer. Let us see the keeper's bounty, therefore, without delay.'

The hermit cast a wistful look upon the knight, in which there was a sort of comic expression of hesitation, as if uncertain how far he should act prudently in trusting his guest. There was, however, as much of bold frankness in the knight's

countenance as was possible to be expressed by features. His smile, too, had something in it irresistibly comic, and gave an assurance of faith and loyalty, with which his host could not refrain from sympathising.

After exchanging a mute glance or two, the hermit went to the further side of the hut, and opened a hutch, which was concealed with great care and some ingenuity. Out of the recesses of a dark closet, into which this aperture gave admittance, he brought a large pasty, baked in a pewter platter of unusual dimensions. This mighty dish he placed before his guest, who, using his poniard to cut it open, lost no time in making himself acquainted with its contents.

'How long is it since the good keeper has been here?' said the knight to his host, after having swallowed several hasty morsels of this reinforcement to the hermit's good cheer.

'About two months,' answered the father, hastily.

'By the true Lord,' answered the knight, 'everything in your hermitage is miraculous, Holy Clerk! for I would have been sworn that the fat buck which furnished this venison had been running on foot within the week.'

The hermit was somewhat discountenanced by this observation: and, moreover, he had made but a poor figure while gazing on the diminution of the pasty, on which his guest was making desperate inroads—a warfare in which his previous profession of abstinence left him no pretext for joining.

'I have been in Palestine, Sir Clerk,' said the knight, stopping short of a sudden, 'and I bethink me it is a custom there that every host who entertains a guest shall assure him of the wholesomeness of his food by partaking of it along with him. Far be it from me to suspect so holy a man of aught inhospitable; nevertheless, I will be highly bound to you would you comply with this Eastern custom.'

'To ease your unnecessary scruples, Sir Knight, I will for once depart from my rule,' replied the hermit. And as there were no forks in those days, his clutches were instantly in the bowels of the pasty.

The ice of ceremony being once broken, it seemed matter of rivalry between the guest and the entertainer which should display the best appetite: and although the former had probably fasted longest, yet the hermit fairly surpassed him.

'Holy Clerk,' said the knight, when his hunger was appeased, 'I would gage my good horse yonder against a zecchin, that that same honest keeper to whom we are obliged for the

venison has left thee a stoup of wine, or a runlet of canary, or some such trifle, by way of ally to this noble pasty. This would be a circumstance, doubtless, totally unworthy to dwell in the memory of so rigid an anchorite; yet, I think, were you to search yonder crypt once more, you would find that I am right in my conjecture.

The hermit replied by a grin; and returning to the hutch, he produced a leathern bottle, which might contain about four quarts. He also brought forth two large drinking cups, made out of the horn of the urus, and hooped with silver. Having made this goodly provision for washing down the supper, he seemed to think no farther ceremonious scruple necessary on his part; but filling both cups, and saying, in the Saxon fashion, '*Wæs hæl, Sir Sluggish Knight!*' he emptied his own at a draught.

'*Drinc hæl, Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst!*' answered the warrior, and did his host reason in a similar brimmer.

'Holy Clerk,' said the stranger, after the first cup was thus swallowed, 'I cannot but marvel that a man possessed of such thews and sinews as thine, and who therewithal shows the talent of so goodly a trencherman, should think of abiding by himself in this wilderness. In my judgment, you are fitter to keep a castle or a fort, eating of the fat and drinking of the strong, than to live here upon pulse and water, or even upon the charity of the keeper. At least, were I as thou, I should find myself both disport and plenty out of the king's deer. There is many a goodly herd in these forests, and a buck will never be missed that goes to the use of St. Dunstan's chaplain.'

'Sir Sluggish Knight,' replied the Clerk, 'these are dangerous words, and I pray you to forbear them. I am true hermit to the king and law, and were I to spoil my liege's game, I should be sure of the prison, and, an my gown saved me not, were in some peril of hanging.'

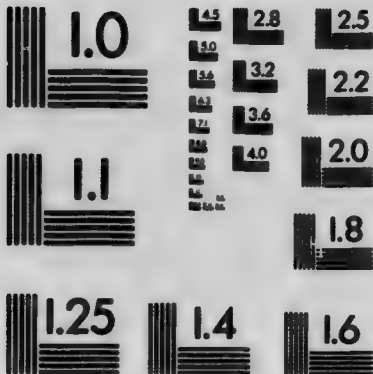
'Nevertheless, were I as thou,' said the knight, 'I would take my walk by moonlight, when foresters and keepers were warm in bed, and ever and anon — as I pattered my prayers — I would let fly a shaft among the herds of dun deer that feed in the glades. Resolve me, Holy Clerk, hast thou never practised such a pastime?'

'Friend Sluggard,' answered the hermit, 'thou hast seen all that can concern thee of my housekeeping, and something more than he deserves who takes up his quarters by violence.



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Credit me, it is better to enjoy the good which God sends thee, than to be impertinently curious how it comes. Fill thy cup, and welcome; and do not, I pray thee, by further impertinent inquiries, put me to show that thou couldst hardly have made good thy lodging had I been earnest to oppose thee.'

'By my faith,' said the knight, 'thou makest me more curious than ever! Thou art the most mysterious hermit I ever met; and I will know more of thee ere we part. As for thy threats, know, holy man, thou speakest to one whose trade it is to find out danger wherever it is to be met with.'

'Sir Sluggish Knight, I drink to thee,' said the hermit, 'respecting thy valour much, but deeming wondrous slightly of thy discretion. If thou wilt take equal arms with me, I will give thee, in all friendship and brotherly love, such sufficing penance and complete absolution that thou shalt not for the next twelve months sin the sin of excess and curiosity.'

The knight pledged him, and desired him to name his weapons.

'There is none,' replied the hermit, 'from the scissiors of Delilah and the tenpenny nail of Jael to the scimitar of Goliath, at which I am not a match for thee. But, if I am to make the election, what sayest thou, good friend, to these trinkets?'

Thus speaking, he opened another hutch, and took out from it a couple of broadswords and bucklers, such as were used by the yeomanry of the period. The knight, who watched his motions, observed that this second place of concealment was furnished with two or three good long-bows, a cross-bow, a bundle of bolts for the latter, and half a dozen sheaves of arrows for the former. A harp, and other matters of very uncanonical appearance, were also visible when this dark recess was opened.

'I promise thee, brother Clerk,' said he, 'I will ask thee no more offensive questions. The contents of that cupboard are an answer to all my inquiries; and I see a weapon there (here he stooped and took out the harp) on which I would more gladly prove my skill with thee than at the sword and buckler.'

'I hope, Sir Knight,' said the hermit, 'thou hast given no good reason for thy surname of the Sluggard. I do promise thee, I suspect thee grievously. Nevertheless, thou art my guest, and I will not put thy manhood to the proof without thine own free will. Sit thee down, then, and fill thy cup; let us drink, sing, and be merry. If thou knowest ever a good lay, thou shalt be welcome to a nook of pasty at Copmanhurst so

long as I serve the chapel of St. Dunstan, which, please God, shall be till I change my grey covering for one of green turf. But come, fill a flagon, for it will crave some time to tune the harp; and nought pitches the voice and sharpens the ear like a cup of wine. For my part, I love to feel the grape at my very finger-ends before they make the harp-strings tinkle.'¹

¹ See *The Jolly Hermit*. Note 2.

CHAPTER XVII

At eve, within yon studious nook,
I ope my brass-embossed book,
Portray'd with many a holy deed
Of martyrs crown'd with heavenly meed ;
Then, as my taper waxes dim,
Chant, ere I sleep, my measured hymn.

Who but would cast his pomp away,
To take my staff and amice grey,
And to the world's tumultuous stage,
Prefer the peaceful HERMITAGE ?

WARTON.

NOTWITHSTANDING the prescription of the genial hermit, with which his guest willingly complied, he found it no easy matter to bring the harp to harmony. 'Methinks, holy father,' said he, 'the instrument wants one string, and the rest have been somewhat misused.'

'Ay, mark'st thou that?' replied the hermit; 'that shows thee a master of the craft. Wine and wassail,' he added, gravely casting up his eyes — 'all the fault of wine and wassail! I told Allan-a-Dale, the northern minstrel, that he would damage the harp if he touched it after the seventh cup, but he would not be controlled. Friend, I drink to thy successful performance.'

So saying, he took off his cup with much gravity, at the same time shaking his head at the intemperance of the Scottish harper.

The knight, in the meantime, had brought the strings into some order, and after a short prelude, asked his host whether he would choose a *sirvente* in the language of *oc*, or a *lai* in the language of *oui*, or a *virelai*, or a ballad in the vulgar English.¹

'A ballad — a ballad,' said the hermit, 'against all the *ocs* and *ouis* of France. Downright English am I, Sir Knight, and

¹ See Minstrelsy. Note 2.

downright English was my patron St. Dunstan, and scorned *oc* and *out*, as he would have scorned the parings of the devil's hoof; downright English alone shall be sung in this cell.'

'I will assay, then,' said the knight, 'a ballad composed by a Saxon gleeman, whom I knew in Holy Land.'

It speedily appeared that, if the knight was not a complete master of the minstrel art, his taste for it had at least been cultivated under the best instructors. Art had taught him to soften the faults of a voice which had little compass, and was naturally rough rather than mellow, and, in short, had done all that culture can do in supplying natural deficiencies. His performance, therefore, might have been termed very respectable by abler judges than the hermit, especially as the knight threw into the notes now a degree of spirit, and now of plaintive enthusiasm, which gave force and energy to the verses which he sung.

THE CRUSADER'S RETURN

High deeds achieved of knightly fame,
From Palestine the champion came;
The cross upon his shoulders borne
Battle and blast had dimm'd and torn.
Each dint upon his batter'd shield
Was token of a foughten field;
And thus, beneath his lady's bower,
He sung, as fell the twilight hour:—

'Joy to the fair!—thy knight behold,
Return'd from yonder land of gold.
No wealth he brings, nor wealth can need
Save his good arms and battle-steed,
His spurs, to dash against a foe,
His lance and sword to lay him low;
Such all the trophies of his toil,
Such—and the hope of Tekla's son!

'Joy to the fair! whose constant knight
Her favour fired to feats of might;
Unnoted shall she not remain,
Where meet the bright and noble train;
Minstrel shall sing and herald tell—
"Mark yonder maid of beauty well,
'Tis she for whose bright eyes was won
The listed field at Askalon!

"Note well her smile! it edged the blade
Which fifty wives to widows made,
Then, vain his strength and Mahound's spell,
Iconium's turban'd soldan fell.

Seest thou her locks, whose sunny glow
Half shows, half shades, her neck of snow?
Twines not of them one golden thread,
But for its sake a Paynim bled."

'Joy to the fair! — my name unknown.
Each deed and all its praise thine own;
Then, oh! unbar this churlish gate,
The night dew falls, the hour is late.
Inured to Syria's glowing breath,
I feel the north breeze chill as death;
Let grateful love quell maiden shame,
And grant him bliss who brings thee fame.'

During this performance, the hermit demeaned himself much like a first-rate critic of the present day at a new opera. He reclined back upon his seat with his eyes half shut: now folding his hands and twisting his thumbs, he seemed absorbed in attention, and anon, balancing his expanded palms, he gently flourished them in time to the music. At one or two favourite cadences he threw in a little assistance of his own, where the knight's voice seemed unable to carry the air so high as his worshipful taste approved. When the song was ended, the anchorite emphatically declared it a good one, and well sung.

'And yet,' said he, 'I think my Saxon countrymen had herded long enough with the Normans to fall into the tone of their melancholy ditties. What took the honest knight from home? or what could he expect but to find his mistress agreeably engaged with a rival on his return, and his serenade, as they call it, as little regarded' — the caterwauling of a cat in the gutter? Nevertheless, Sir Knight, I drink this cup to thee, to the success of all true lovers. I fear you are none,' he added, on observing that the knight, whose brain began to be heated with these repeated draughts, qualified his flagon with the water pitcher.

'Why,' said the knight, 'did you not tell me that this water was from the well of your blessed patron, St. Dunstan?'

'Ay, truly,' said the hermit, 'and many a hundred of pagans did he baptise there, but I never heard that he drank any of it. Everything should be put to its proper use in this world. St. Dunstan knew, as well as any one, the prerogatives of a jovial friar.'

And so saying, he reached the harp, and entertained his guest with the following characteristic song, to a sort of derry-down chorus,¹ appropriate to an old English ditty: —

¹ See Note 10.

THE BAREFOOTED FRIAR

I'll give thee, good fellow, a twelvemonth or twain,
To search Europe through, from Byzantium to Spain ;
But ne'er shall you find, should you search till you tire,
So happy a man as the Barefooted Friar.

Your knight for his lady pricks forth in career,
And is brought home at evensong prick'd through with a spear ;
I confess him in haste — for his lady desires
No comfort on earth save the Barefooted Friar's.

Your monarch ! Pahaw ! many a prince has been known
To barter his robes for our cowl and our gown ;
But which of us e'er felt the idle desire
To exchange for a crown the grey hood of a Friar !

The Friar has walk'd out, and where'er he has gone
The land and its fatness is mark'd for his own ;
He can roam where he lists, he can stop when he tires,
For every man's house is the Barefooted Friar's.

He's expected at noon, and no wight till he comes
May profane the great chair, or the porridge of plums ;
For the best of the cheer, and the seat by the fire,
Is the undenied right of the Barefooted Friar.

He's expected at night, and the pasty's made hot,
They broach the brown ale, and they fill the black pot,
And the goodwife would wish the goodman in the mire,
Ere he lack'd a soft pillow, the Barefooted Friar.

Long flourish the sandal, the cord, and the cope,
The dread of the devil and trust of the Pope ;
For to gather life's roses, unscathed by the briar,
Is granted alone to the Barefooted Friar.

'By my troth,' said the knight, 'thou hast sung well and lustily, and in high praise of thine order. And, talking of the devil, Holy Clerk, are you not afraid he may pay you a visit during some of your uncanonical pastimes ?'

'I uncanonical !' answered the hermit ; 'I scorn the charge — I scorn it with my heels ! I serve the duty of my chapel duly and truly. Two masses daily, morning and evening, primes, noons, and vespers, *aves, credos, paters* —'

'Excepting moonlight nights, when the venison is in season,' said his guest.

'*Exceptis excipiendis*,' replied the hermit, 'as our old abbot taught me to say, when impertinent laymen should ask me if I kept every punctilio of mine order.'

'True, holy father,' said the knight; 'but the devil is apt to keep an eye on such exceptions goes about, thou knowest, like a roaring lion.'

'Let him roar here if he dares,' said the Friar; 'a touch of my cord will make him roar as loud as the tongs of St. Dunstan himself did. I never feared man, and I as little fear the devil and hisimps. St. Dunstan, St. Dubric, St. Winibald, St. Winifred, St. Swibert, St. Willick, not forgetting St. Thomas a Kent and my own poor merits to speed, — I defy every devil of them, come cut and long tail. But to let you into a secret, I never speak upon such subjects, my friend, until after morning vespers.'

He changed the conversation: fast and furious grew the mirth of the parties, and many a song was exchanged betwixt them, when their revels were interrupted by a loud knocking at the door of the hermitage.

The occasion of this interruption we can only explain by resuming the adventures of another set of our characters; for, like old Ariosto, we do not pique ourselves upon continuing uniformly to keep company with any one personage of our drama.

CHAPTER XVIII

Away! our journey lies through dell and dingle,
Where the blithe fawn trips by its timid mother,
Where the broad oak, with intercepting boughs,
Chequers the sunbeam in the greensward alley —
Up and away! for lovely paths are these
To tread, when the glad Sun is on his throne;
Less pleasant, and less safe, when Cynthia's lamp
With doubtful glimmer lights the dreary forest.

Eltrick Forest.

WHEN Cedric the Saxon saw his son drop down senseless in the lists at Ashby, his first impulse was to order him into the custody and care of his own attendants; but the words choked in his throat. He could not bring himself to acknowledge, in presence of such an assembly, the son whom he had renounced and disinherited. He ordered, however, Oswald to keep an eye upon him; and directed that officer, with two of his serfs, to convey Ivanhoe to Ashby as soon as the crowd had dispersed. Oswald, however, was anticipated in this good office. The crowd dispersed, indeed, but the knight was nowhere to be seen.

It was in vain that Cedric's cupbearer looked around for his young master: he saw the bloody spot on which he had lately sunk down, but he saw no longer; it seemed as if the fairies had carried him from the spot. Perhaps Oswald — for the Saxons were superstitious — might have adopted some such hypothesis as to what had become of Ivanhoe's disappearance, had he not suddenly cast his eye upon a person attired like a squire, in whom he recognised the features of his fellow-servant Gurth. Anxious concerning his master's fate, and in despair at his sudden disappearance, the translated swineherd was searching for him everywhere, and had neglected, in doing so, the concealment on which his own safety depended. Oswald deemed it his duty to secure Gurth, as a fugitive of whose fate his master was to judge.

Renewing his inquiries concerning the fate of Ivanhoe, the only information which the cupbearer could collect from the bystanders was, that the knight had been raised with care by certain well-attired grooms, and placed in a litter belonging to a lady among the spectators, which had immediately transported him out of the press. Oswald, on receiving this intelligence, resolved to return to his master for farther instructions, carrying along with him Gurth, whom he considered in some sort as a deserter from the service of Cedric.

The Saxon had been under very intense and agonising apprehensions concerning his son, for nature had asserted her rights, in spite of the patriotic stoicism which laboured to disown her. But no sooner was he informed that Ivanhoe was in careful, and probably in friendly, hands than the paternal anxiety, which had been excited by the dubiety of his fate, gave way anew to the feeling of injured pride and resentment at what he termed Wilfred's filial disobedience. 'Let him wander his way,' said he; 'let those leech his wounds for whose sake he encountered them. He is fitter to do the juggling tricks of the Norman chivalry than to maintain the fame and honour of his English ancestry with the glaive and brown-bill, the good old weapons of the country.'

'If to maintain the honour of ancestry,' said Rowena, who was present, 'it is sufficient to be wise in council and brave in execution, to be boldest among the bold, and gentlest among the gentle, I know no voice, save his father's——'

'Be silent, Lady Rowena! on this subject only I hear you not. Prepare yourself for the Prince's festival: we have been summoned thither with unwonted circumstance of honour and of courtesy, such as the haughty Normans have rarely used to our race since the fatal day of Hastings. Thither will I go, were it only to show these proud Normans how little the fate of a son who could defeat their bravest can affect a Saxon.'

'Thither,' said Rowena, 'do I not go; and I pray you to beware, lest what you mean for courage and obstinacy shall be accounted hardness of heart.'

'Remain at home then, ungrateful lady,' answered Cedric; 'thine is the hard heart, which can sacrifice the weal of an oppressed people to an idle and unauthorised attachment. I seek the noble Athelstane, and with him attend the banquet of John of Anjou.'

He went accordingly to the banquet, of which we have already mentioned the principal events. Immediately upon retiring

from the castle, the Saxon thanes, with their attendants, took horse; and it was during the bustle which attended their doing so that Cedric for the first time cast his eyes upon the deserter Gurth. The noble Saxon had returned from the banquet, as we have seen, in no very placid humour, and wanted but a pretext for wreaking his anger upon some one. 'The gyves!' he said — 'the gyves! Oswald — Hundebert! Dogs and villains! why leave ye the knave unfettered?'

Without daring to remonstrate, the companions of Gurth bound him with a halter, as the readiest cord which occurred. He submitted to the operation without remonstrance, except that, darting a reproachful look at his master, he said, 'This comes of loving your flesh and blood better than mine own.'

'To horse, and forward!' said Cedric.

'It is indeed full time,' said the noble Athelstane; 'for, if we ride not the faster, the worthy Abbot Walthoeff's preparations for a *re-re-supper*¹ will be altogether spoiled.'

The travellers, however, used such speed as to reach the convent of St. Withold's before the apprehended evil took place. The Abbot, himself of ancient Saxon descent, received the noble Saxons with the profuse and exuberant hospitality of their nation, wherein they indulged to a late, or rather an early, hour; nor did they take leave of their reverend host the next morning until they had shared with him a sumptuous refecton.

As the cavalcade left the court of the monastery, an incident happened somewhat alarming to the Saxons, who, of all people of Europe, were most addicted to a superstitious observance of omens, and to whose opinions can be traced most of those notions upon such subjects still to be found among our popular antiquities. For the Normans being a mixed race, and better informed according to the information of the times, had lost most of the superstitious prejudices which their ancestors had brought from Scandinavia, and piqued themselves upon thinking freely on such topics.

In the present instance, the apprehension of impending evil was inspired by no less respectable a prophet than a large lean black dog, which, sitting upright, howled most piteously as the foremost riders left the gate, and presently afterwards, barking wildly, and jumping to and fro, seemed bent upon attaching itself to the party.

¹ A *re-re-supper* was a night-meal, and sometimes signified a collation which was given at a late hour, after the regular supper had made its appearance. — L. T.

'I like not that music, father Cedric,' said Athelstane; for by this title of respect he was accustomed to address him.

'Nor I either, uncle,' said Wamba; 'I greatly fear we shall have to pay the piper.'

'In my mind,' said Athelstane, upon whose memory the Abbot's good ale — for Burton was already famous for that genial liquor — had made a favourable impression — 'in my mind we had better turn back and abide with the Abbot until the afternoon. It is unlucky to travel where your path is crossed by a monk, a hare, or a howling dog, until you have eaten your next meal.'

'Away!' said Cedric, impatiently; 'the day is already too short for our journey. For the dog, I know it to be the cur of the runaway slave Gurth, a useless fugitive like its master.'

So saying, and rising at the same time in his stirrups, impatient at the interruption of his journey, he launched his javelin at poor Fangs; for Fangs it was, who, having traced his master thus far upon his stolen expedition, had here lost him, and was now, in his uncouth way, rejoicing at his re-appearance. The javelin inflicted a wound upon the animal's shoulder, and narrowly missed pinning him to the earth; and Fangs fled howling from the presence of the enragedthane. Gurth's heart swelled within him; for he felt this meditated slaughter of his faithful adherent in a degree much deeper than the harsh treatment he had himself received. Having in vain attempted to raise his hand to his eyes, he said to Wamba, who, seeing his master's ill-humour, had prudently retreated to the rear, 'I pray thee, do me the kindness to wipe my eyes with the skirt of thy mantle; the dust offends me, and these bonds will not let me help myself one way or another.'

Wamba did him the service he required, and they rode side by side for some time, during which Gurth maintained a moody silence. At length he could repress his feelings no longer.

'Friend Wamba,' said he, 'of all those who are fools enough to serve Cedric, thou alone hast dexterity enough to make thy folly acceptable to him. Go to him, therefore, and tell him that neither for love nor fear will Gurth serve him longer. He may strike the head from me, he may scourge me, he may load me with irons, but henceforth he shall never compel me either to love or to obey him. Go to him, then, and tell him that Gurth the son of Beowulph renounces his service.'

'Assuredly,' said Wamba, 'fool as I am, I shall not do your fool's errand. Cedric hath his javelin stuck into his girdle, and thou knowest he does not always miss his mark.'

'I care not,' replied Gurth, 'how soon he makes a mark of me. Yesterday he left Wilfred, my young master, in his blood. To-day he has striven to kill before my face the only other living creature that ever showed me kindness. By St Edmund, St. Dunstan, St. Withold, St. Edward the Confessor, and every other Saxon saint in the calendar (for Cedric never swore by any that was not of Saxon lineage, and all his household had the same limited devotion), I will never forgive him!'

'To my thinking now,' said the Jester, who was frequently wont to act as peacemaker in the family, 'our master did not propose to hurt Fangs, but only to affright him. For, if you observed, he rose in his stirrups, as thereby meaning to overcast the mark; and so he would have done, but Fangs happening to bound up at the very moment, received a scratch, which I will be bound to heal with a penny's breadth of tar.'

'If I thought so,' said Gurth — 'if I could but think so; but no, I saw the javelin was well aimed; I heard it whizz through the air with all the wrathful malevolence of him who cast it, and it quivered after it had pitched in the ground, as if with regret for having missed its mark. By the hog dear to St. Anthony, I renounce him!'

And the indignant swineherd resumed his sullen silence, which no efforts of the Jester could again induce him to break.

Meanwhile Cedric and Athelstane, the leaders of the troop, conversed together on the state of the land, on the dissensions of the royal family, on the feuds and quarrels among the Norman nobles, and on the chance which there was that the oppressed Saxons might be able to free themselves from the yoke of the Normans, or at least to elevate themselves into national consequence and independence, during the civil convulsions which were likely to ensue. On this subject Cedric was all animation. The restoration of the independence of his race was the idol of his heart, to which he had willingly sacrificed domestic happiness and the interests of his son. But, in order to achieve this great revolution in favour of the native English, it was necessary that they should be united among themselves, and act under an acknowledged head. The necessity of choosing their chief from the Saxon blood-royal was not only evident in itself, but had been made a solemn condition by those whom Cedric had entrusted with his secret plans and hopes. Athelstone had this quality at least; and though he had few mental accomplishments or talents to

recommend him as a leader, he had still a goodly person, was no coward, had been accustomed to martial exercises, and seemed willing to defer to the advice of counsellors more wise than himself. Above all, he was known to be liberal and hospitable, and believed to be good-natured. But whatever pretensions Athelstane had to be considered as head of the Saxon confederacy, many of that nation were disposed to prefer to him the title of the Lady Rowena, who drew her descent from Alfred, and whose father having been a chief renowned for wisdom, courage, and generosity, his memory was highly honoured by his oppressed countrymen.

It would have been no difficult thing for Cedric, had he been so disposed, to have placed himself at the head of a third party, as formidable at least as any of the others. To counter-balance their royal descent, he had courage, activity, energy, and, above all, that devoted attachment to the cause which had procured him the epithet of *THE SAXON*, and his birth was inferior to none, excepting only that of Athelstane and his ward. These qualities, however, were unalloyed by the slightest shade of selfishness; and, instead of dividing yet further his weakened nation by forming a faction of his own, it was a leading part of Cedric's plan to extinguish that which already existed by promoting a marriage betwixt Rowena and Athelstane. An obstacle occurred to this his favourite project in the mutual attachment of his ward and his son; and hence the original cause of the banishment of Wilfred from the house of his father.

This stern measure Cedric had adopted in hopes that, during Wilfred's absence, Rowena might relinquish her preference; but in this hope he was disappointed — a disappointment which might be attributed in part to the mode in which his ward had been educated. Cedric, to whom the name of Alfred was as that of a deity, had treated the sole remaining scion of that great monarch with a degree of observance such as, perhaps, was in those days scarce paid to an acknowledged princess. Rowena's will had been in almost all cases a law to his household; and Cedric himself, as if determined that her sovereignty should be fully acknowledged within that little circle at least, seemed to take a pride in acting as the first of her subjects. Thus trained in the exercise not only of free will but despotie authority, Rowena was, by her previous education, disposed both to resist and to resent any attempt to control her affections, or dispose of her hand contrary to her inclinations,

and to assert her independence in a case in which even those females who have been trained up to obedience and subjection are not infrequently apt to dispute the authority of guardians and parents. The opinions which she felt strongly she avowed boldly; and Cedric, who could not free himself from his habitual deference to her opinions, felt totally at a loss how to enforce his authority of guardian.

It was in vain that he attempted to dazzle her with the prospect of a visionary throne. Rowena, who possessed strong sense, neither considered his plan as practicable nor as desirable, so far as she was concerned, could it have been achieved. Without attempting to conceal her avowed preference of Wilfred of Ivanhoe, she declared that, were that favoured knight out of question, she would rather take refuge in a convent than share a throne with Athelstane, whom, having always despised, she now began, on account of the trouble she received on his account, thoroughly to detest.

Nevertheless, Cedric, whose opinion of women's constancy was far from strong, persisted in using every means in his power to bring about the proposed match, in which he conceived he was rendering an important service to the Saxon cause. The sudden and romantic appearance of his son in the lists at Ashby he had justly regarded as almost a death's blow to his hopes. His paternal affection, it is true, had for an instant gained the victory over pride and patriotism; but both had returned in full force, and under their joint operation he was now bent upon making a determined effort for the union of Athelstane and Rowena, together with expediting those other measures which seemed necessary to forward the restoration of Saxon independence.

On this last subject he was now labouring with Athelstane, not without having reason, every now and then, to lament, like Hotspur, that he should have moved such a dish of skimmed milk to so honourable an action. Athelstane, it is true, was vain enough, and loved to have his ears tickled with tales of his high descent, and of his right by inheritance to homage and sovereignty. But his petty vanity was sufficiently gratified by receiving this homage at the hands of his immediate attendants and of the Saxons who approached him. If he had the courage to encounter danger, he at least hated the trouble of going to seek it; and while he agreed in the general principles laid down by Cedric concerning the claim of the Saxons to independence, and was still more easily convinced of his own

title to reign over them when that independence should be attained, yet when the means of asserting these rights came to be discussed, he was still Athelstane the Unready — slow, irresolute, procrastinating, and unenterprising. The warm and impassioned exhortations of Cedric had as little effect upon his impassive temper as red-hot balls alighting in the water, which produce a little sound and smoke, and are instantly extinguished.

If, leaving this task, which might be compared to spurring a tired jade, or to hammering upon cold iron, Cedric fell back to his ward Rowena, he received little more satisfaction from conferring with her. For, as his presence interrupted the discourse between the lady and her favourite attendant upon the gallantry and fate of Wilfred, Elgitha failed not to revenge both her mistress and herself by recurring to the overthrow of Athelstane in the lists, the most disagreeable subject which could greet the ears of Cedric. To this sturdy Saxon, therefore, the day's journey was fraught with all manner of displeasure and discomfort; so that he more than once internally cursed the tournament, and him who had proclaimed it, together with his own folly in ever thinking of going thither.

At noon, upon the motion of Athelstane, the travellers paused in a woodland shade by a fountain, to repose their horses and partake of some provisions, with which the hospitable Abbot had loaded a sumpter mule. Their repast was a pretty long one; and these several interruptions rendered it impossible for them to hope to reach Rotherwood without travelling all night, a conviction which induced them to proceed on their way at a more hasty pace than they had hitherto used.

CHAPTER XIX

A train of armed men, some noble dame
Escorting (so their scatter'd words discover'd,
As unperceived I hung upon their rear),
Are close at hand, and mean to pass the night
Within the castle.

Orra, a Tragedy.

THE travellers had now reached the verge of the wooded country, and were about to plunge into its recesses, held dangerous at that time from the number of outlaws whom oppression and poverty had driven to despair, and who occupied the forests in such large bands as could easily bid defiance to the feeble police of the period. From these rovers, however, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, Cedric and Athelstane accounted themselves secure, as they had in attendance ten servants, besides Wamba and Gurth, whose aid could not be counted upon, the one being a jester and the other a captive. It may be added, that in travelling thus late through the forest, Cedric and Athelstane relied on their descent and character as well as their courage. The outlaws, whom the severity of the forest laws had reduced to this roving and desperate mode of life, were chiefly peasants and yeomen of Saxon descent, and were generally supposed to respect the persons and property of their countrymen.

As the travellers journeyed on their way, they were alarmed by repeated cries for assistance; and when they rode up to the place from whence they came, they were surprised to find a horse-litter placed upon the ground, beside which sat a young woman, richly dressed in the Jewish fashion, while an old man, whose yellow cap proclaimed him to belong to the same nation, walked up and down with gestures of the deepest despair, and wrung his hands as if affected by some strange disaster.

To the inquiries of Athelstane and Cedric, the old Jew could for some time only answer by invoking the protection of all the

patriarchs of the Old Testament successively against the sons of Ishmael, who were coming to smite them, hip and thigh, with the edge of the sword. When he began to come to himself out of this agony of terror, Isaac of York (for it was our old friend) was at length able to explain that he had hired a body-guard of six men at Ashby, together with mules for carrying the litter of a sick friend. This party had undertaken to escort him as far as Doncaster. They had come thus far in safety; but, having received information from a wood-cutter that there was a strong band of outlaws lying in wait in the woods before them, Isaac's mercenaries had not only taken flight, but had carried off with them the horses which bore the litter, and left the Jew and his daughter without the means either of defence or of retreat, to be plundered, and probably murdered, by the banditti, who they expected every moment would bring down upon them. 'Would it but please your valours,' added Isaac, in a tone of deep humiliation, 'to permit the poor Jews to travel under your safeguard, I swear by the tables of our Law that never has favour been conferred upon a child of Israel since the days of our captivity which shall be more gratefully acknowledged.'

'Dog of a Jew!' said Athelstane, whose memory was of that petty kind which stores up trifles of all kinds, but particularly trifling offences, 'dost not remember how thou didst beard us in the gallery at the tilt-yard? Fight or flee, or compound with the outlaws as thou dost list, ask neither aid nor company from us; and if they rob only such as thee, who rob all the world, I, for mine own share, shall hold them right honest folk.'

Cedric did not assent to the severe proposal of his companion. 'We shall do better,' said he, 'to leave them two of our attendants and two horses to convey them back to the next village. It will diminish our strength but little; and with your good sword, noble Athelstane, and the aid of those who remain, it will be light work for us to face twenty of those runagates.'

Rowena, somewhat alarmed by the mention of outlaws in force, and so near them, strongly seconded the proposal of her guardian. But Rebecca, suddenly quitting her dejected posture, and making her way through the attendants to the palfrey of the Saxon lady, knelt down, and, after the Oriental fashion in addressing superiors, kissed the hem of Rowena's garment. Then rising and throwing back her veil, she implored her in

the great name of the God whom they both worshipped, and by that revelation of the Law upon Mount Sinai in which they both believed, that she would have compassion upon them, and suffer them to go forward under their safeguard. 'It is not for myself that I pray this favour,' said Rebecca; 'nor is it even for that poor old man. I know, that to wrong and to spoil our nation is a light fault, if not a merit, with the Christians; and what is it to us whether it be done in the city, in the desert, or in the field? But it is in the name of one dear to many, and dear even to you, that I beseech you to let this sick person be transported with care and tenderness under your protection. For, if evil chance him, the last moment of your life would be embittered with regret for denying that which I ask of you.'

The noble and solemn air with which Rebecca made this appeal gave it double weight with the fair Saxon.

'The man is old and feeble,' she said to her guardian, 'the maiden young and beautiful, their friend sick and in peril of his life; Jews though they be, we cannot as Christians leave them in this extremity. Let them unload two of the sumpter mules and put the baggage behind two of the serfs. The mules may transport the litter, and we have led horses for the old man and his daughter.'

Cedric readily assented to what she proposed, and Athelstane only added the condition, 'That they should travel in the rear of the whole party, where Wamba,' he said, 'might attend them with his shield of boar's brawn.'

'I have left my shield in the tilt-yard,' answered the Jester, 'as has been the fate of many a better knight than myself.'

Athelstane coloured deeply, for such had been his own fate on the last day of the tournament; while Rowena, who was pleased in the same proportion, as if to make amends for the brutal jest of her unfeeling suitor, requested Rebecca to ride by her side.

'It were not fit I should do so,' answered Rebecca, with proud humility, 'where my society might be held a disgrace to my protectress.'

By this time the change of baggage was hastily achieved; for the single word 'outlaws' rendered every one sufficiently alert, and the approach of twilight made the sound yet more impressive. Amid the bustle, Gurth was taken from horseback, in the course of which removal he prevailed upon the Jester to slack the

cord with which his arms were bound. It was so negligently refastened, perhaps intentionally, on the part of Wamba, that Gurth found no difficulty in freeing his arms altogether from bondage, and then, gliding into the thicket, he made his escape from the party.

The bustle had been considerable, and it was some time before Gurth was missed; for, as he was to be placed for the rest of the journey behind a servant, every one supposed that some other of his companions had him under his custody, and when it began to be whispered among them that Gurth had actually disappeared, they were under such immediate expectation of an attack from the outlaws that it was not held convenient to pay much attention to the circumstance.

The path upon which the party travelled was now so narrow as not to admit, with any sort of convenience, above two riders abreast, and began to descend into a dingle, traversed by a brook whose banks were broken, swampy, and overgrown with dwarf willows. Cedric and Athelstane, who were at the head of their retinue, saw the risk of being attacked at this pass; but neither of them having had much practice in war, no better mode of preventing the danger occurred to them than that they should hasten through the defile as fast as possible. Advancing, therefore, without much order, they had just crossed the brook with a part of their followers, when they were assailed in front, flank, and rear at once, with an impetuosity to which, in their confused and ill-prepared condition, it was impossible to offer effectual resistance. The shout of 'A white dragon! -- a white dragon! St. George for merry England!' war-cries adopted by the assailants, as belonging to their assumed character of Saxon outlaws, was heard on every side, and on every side enemies appeared with a rapidity of advance and attack which seemed to multiply their numbers.

Both the Saxon chiefs were made prisoners at the same moment, and each under circumstances expressive of his character. Cedric, the instant an enemy appeared, launched at him his remaining javelin, which, taking better effect than that which he had hurled at Fangs, nailed the man against an oak-tree that happened to be close behind him. Thus far successful, Cedric purred his horse against a second, drawing his sword at the same time, and striking with such inconsiderate fury that his weapon encountered a thick branch which hung over him, and he was disarmed by the violence of his own blow. He was instantly made prisoner, and pulled from his horse by

two or three of the banditti who crowded around him. Athelstane shared his captivity, his bridle having been seized and he himself forcibly dismounted long before he could draw his weapon or assume any posture of effectual defence.

The attendants, embarrassed with baggage, surprised and terrified at the fate of their master, fell an easy prey to the assailants; while the Lady Rowena, in the centre of the cavalcade, and the Jew and his daughter in the rear, experienced the same misfortune.

Of all the train none escaped except Wamba, who showed upon the occasion much more courage than those who pretended to greater sense. He possessed himself of a sword belonging to one of the domestics, who was just drawing it with a tardy and irresolute hand, laid it about him like a lion, drove back several who approached him, and made a brave though ineffectual attempt to succour his master. Finding himself overpowered, the Jester at length threw himself from his horse, plunged into the thicket, and, favoured by the general confusion, escaped from the scene of action.

Yet the valiant Jester, as soon as he found himself safe, hesitated more than once whether he should not turn back and share the captivity of a master to whom he was sincerely attached.

'I have heard men talk of the blessings of freedom,' he said to himself, 'but I wish any wise man would teach me what use to make of it now that I have it.'

As he pronounced these words aloud, a voice very near him called out in a low and cautious tone, 'Wamba!' and at the same time a dog, which he recognised to be Fangs, jumped up and fawned upon him. 'Gurth!' answered Wamba with the same caution, and the swineherd immediately stood before him.

'What is the matter?' said he, eagerly; 'what mean these cries and that clashing of swords?'

'Only a trick of the times,' said Wamba; 'they are all prisoners.'

'Who are prisoners?' exclaimed Gurth, impatiently.

'My lord, and my lady, and Athelstane, and Hildebert, and Oswald.'

'In the name of God!' said Gurth, 'how came they prisoners? and to whom?'

'Our master was too ready to fight,' said the Jester, 'and Athelstane was not ready enough, and no other person was

ready at all. And they are prisoners to green cassocks and black visors. And they lie all tumbled about on the green, like the crab-apples that you shake down to your swine. And I would laugh at it,' said the honest Jester, 'if I could for weeping.' And he shed tears of unfeigned sorrow.

Gurth's countenance kindled. 'Wamba,' he said, 'thou hast a weapon, and thy heart was ever stronger than thy brain; we are only two, but a sudden attack from men of resolution will do much; follow me!'

'Whither? and for what purpose?' said the Jester.

'To rescue Cedric.'

'But you have renounced his service but now,' said Wamba.

'That,' said Gurth, 'was but while he was fortunate; follow me!'

As the Jester was about to obey, a third person suddenly made his appearance and commanded them both to halt. From his dress and arms, Wamba would have conjectured him to be one of those outlaws who had just assailed his master; but, besides that he wore no mask, the glittering baldric across his shoulder, with the rich bugle-horn which it supported, as well as the calm and commanding expression of his voice and manner, made him, notwithstanding the twilight, recognise Locksley, the yeoman who had been victorious, under such disadvantageous circumstances, in the contest for the prize of archery.

'What is the meaning of all this,' said he, 'or who is it that rifle, and ransom, and make prisoners in these forests?'

'You may look at their cassocks close by,' said Wamba, 'and see whether they be thy children's coats or no; for they are as like thine own as one green pea-cod is to another.'

'I will learn that presently,' answered Locksley; 'and I charge ye, on peril of your lives, not to stir from the place where yestand, until I have returned. Obey me, and it shall be the better for you and your masters. Yet stay, I must render myself as like these men as possible.'

So saying, he unbuckled his baldric with the bugle, took a feather from his cap, and gave them to Wamba; then drew a vizard from his pouch, and repeating his charges to them to stand fast, went to execute his purposes of reconnoitring.

'Shall we stand fast, Gurth?' said Wamba, 'or shall we e'en give him leg-bail? In my foolish mind, he had all the equipage of a thief too much in readiness to be himself a true man.'

'Let him be the devil,' said Gurth, 'an he will. We can be no worse of waiting his return. If he belong to that party, he must already have given them the alarm, and it will avail nothing either to fight or to fly. Besides, I have late experience that arrant thieves are not the worst men in the world to have to deal with.'

The yeoman returned in the course of a few minutes.

'Friend Gurth,' he said, 'I have mingled among yon men, and have learnt to whom they belong, and whither they are bound. There is, I think, no chance that they will proceed to any actual violence against their prisoners. For three men to attempt them at this moment were little else than madness; for they are good men of war, and have, as such, placed sentinels to give the alarm when any one approaches. But I trust soon to gather such a force as may act in defiance of all their precautions. You are both servants, and, as I think, faithful servants, of Cedric the Saxon, the friend of the rights of Englishmen. He shall not want English hands to help him in this extremity. Come, then, with me, until I gather more aid.'

So saying, he walked through the wood at a great pace, followed by the jester and the swineherd. It was not consistent with Wamba's humour to travel long in silence.

'I think,' said he, looking at the baldrick and bugle which he still carried, 'that I saw the arrow shot which won this gay prize, and that not so long since as Christmas.'

'And I,' said Gurth, 'could take it on my halidome that I have heard the voice of the good yeoman who won it, by night as well as by day, and that the moon is not three days older since I did so.'

'Mine honest friends,' replied the yeoman, 'who or what I am is little to the present purpose; should I free your master, you will have reason to think me the best friend you have ever had in your lives. And whether I am known by one name or another, or whether I can draw a bow as well or better than a cow-keeper, or whether it is my pleasure to walk in sunshine or by moonlight, are matters which, as they do not concern you, so neither need ye busy yourselves respecting them.'

'Our heads are in the lion's mouth,' said Wamba, in a whisper to Gurth, 'get them out how we can.'

'Hush—be silent,' said Gurth. 'Offend him not by thy folly, and I trust sincerely that all will go well.'

CHAPTER XX

When autumn nights were long and drear,
And forest walks were dark and dim,
How sweetly on the pilgrim's ear
Was wont to steal the hermit's hymn !

Devotion borrows Music's tone,
And Music took Devotion's wing ;
And, like the bird that hails the sun,
They soar to heaven, and soaring sing.

The Hermit of St. Clement's Well.

IT was after three hours' good walking that the servants of Cedric, with their mysterious guide, arrived at a small opening in the forest, in the centre of which grew an oak-tree of enormous magnitude, throwing its twisted branches in every direction. Beneath this tree four or five yeomen lay stretched on the ground, while another, as sentinel, walked to and fro in the moonlight shade.

Upon hearing the sound of feet approaching, the watch instantly gave the alarm, and the sleepers as suddenly started up and bent their bows. Six arrows placed on the string were pointed towards the quarter from which the travellers approached, when their guide, being recognised, was welcomed with every token of respect and attachment, and all signs and fears of a rough reception at once subsided.

'Where is the Miller ?' was his first question.

'On the road towards Rotherham.'

'With how many ?' demanded the leader, for such he seemed to be.

'With six men, and good hope of booty, if it please St. Nicholas.'

'Devoutly spoken,' said Locksley ; 'and where is Allan-a-Dale ?'

'Walked up towards the Watling Street to watch for the Prior of Jorvaulx.'

'That is well thought on also,' replied the Captain; 'and where is the Friar?'

'In his cell.'

'Thither will I go,' said Locksley. 'Disperse and seek your companions. Collect what force you can, for there's game afoot that must be hunted hard, and will turn to bay. Meet me here by daybreak. And, stay,' he added, 'I have forgotten what is most necessary of the whole. Two of you take the road quickly towards Torquilstone, the castle of Front-de-Bœuf. A set of gallants, who have been masquerading in such guise as our own, are carrying a band of prisoners thither. Watch them closely, for even if they reach the castle before we collect our force, our honour is concerned to punish them, and we will find means to do so. Keep a close watch on them, therefore; and despatch one of your comrades, the lightest of foot, to bring the news of the yeomen thereabout.'

They promised implicit obedience, and departed with alacrity on their different errands. In the meanwhile, their leader and his two companions, who now looked upon him with great respect, as well as some fear, pursued their way to the chapel of Copmanhurst.

When they had reached the little moonlight glade, having in front the reverend though ruinous chapel and the rude hermitage, so well suited to ascetic devotion, Wamba whispered to Gurth, 'If this be the habitation of a thief, it makes good the old proverb, "The nearer the church the farther from God." And by my cockscorn,' he added, 'I think it be even so. Harken but to the black sanctus which they are singing in the hermitage!'

In fact, the anchorite and his guest were performing, at the full extent of their very powerful lungs, an old drinking song, of which this was the burden:

'Come, trowl the brown bowl to me,
Bully boy, bully boy,
Come, trowl the brown bowl to me.
Ho! jolly Jenkin, I spy a knave in drinking,
Come, trowl the brown bowl to me.'

'Now, that is not ill sung,' said Wamba, who had thrown in a few of his own flourishes to help out the chorus. 'But who, in the saint's name, ever expected to have heard such a jolly chant come from out a hermit's cell at midnight!'

'Marry, that should I,' said Gurth, 'for the jolly clerk of

Copmanhurst is a known man, and kills half the deer that are stolen in this walk. Men say that the keeper has complained to his official, and that he will be stripped of his cowl and cope altogether if he keep not better order.

While they were thus speaking, Locksley's loud and repeated knocks had at length disturbed the anchorite and his guest. 'By my beads,' said the hermit, stopping short in a grand flourish, 'here come more benighted guests. I would not for my cowl that they found us in this goodly exercise. All men have their enemies, good Sir Sluggard; and there be those malignant enough to construe the hospitable refreshment which I have been offering to you, a weary traveller, for the matter of three short hours, into sheer drunkenness and debauchery, vices alike alien to my profession and my disposition.'

'Base calumniators!' replied the knight; 'I would I had the chastising of them. Nevertheless, Holy Clerk, it is true that all have their enemies; and there be those in this very land whom I would rather speak to through the bars of my helmet than barefaced.'

'Get thine iron pot on thy head then, friend Sluggard, as quick, as thy nature will permit,' said the hermit, 'while I remove these pewter flagons, whose late contents run strangely in mine own pate; and to drown the clatter—for, in faith, I feel somewhat unsteady—strike into the tune which thou hearest me sing. It is no matter for the world; I scarce know them myself.'

So saying, he struck up a thundering *De profundis clamavi*, under cover of which he removed the apparatus of their banquet; while the knight, laughing heartily, and arming himself all the while, assisted his host with his voice from time to time as his mirth permitted.

'What devil's matins are you after at this hour?' said a voice from without.

'Heaven forgive you, Sir Traveller!' said the hermit, whose own noise, and perhaps his nocturnal potations, prevented from recognising accents which were tolerably familiar to him. 'Wend on your way, in the name of God and St. Dunstan, and disturb not the devotion of me and my holy brother.'

'Mad priest,' answered the voice from without, 'open to Locksley!'

'All's safe—all's right,' said the hermit to his companion.

'But who is he?' said the Black Knight; 'it imports me much to know.'

'Who is he?' answered the hermit; 'I tell thee he is a friend.'

'But what friend?' answered the knight; 'for he may be friend to thee and none of mine.'

'What friend?' replied the hermit; 'that, now, is one of the questions that is more easily asked than answered. What friend! why, he is, now that I bethink me a little, the very same honest keeper I told thee of a while since.'

'Ay, as honest a keeper as thou art a pious hermit,' replied the knight, 'I doubt it not. But undo the door to him before he beat it from its hinges.'

The dogs, in the meantime, which had made a dreadful baying at the commencement of the disturbance, seemed now to recognise the voice of him who stood without; for, totally changing their manner, they scratched and whined at the door, as if interceding for his admission. The hermit speedily unbolted his portal, and admitted Locksley, with his two companions.

'Why, hermit,' was the yeoman's first question as soon as he beheld the knight, 'what boon companion hast thou here?'

'A brother of our order,' replied the Friar, shaking his head; 'we have been at our orisons all night.'

'He is a monk of the church militant, I think,' answered Locksley; 'and there be more of them abroad. I tell thee, Friar, thou must lay down the rosary and take up the quarter-staff, we shall need every one of our merry men, whether clerk or layman. But,' he added, taking him a step aside, 'art thou mad? to give admittance to a knight thou dost not know? Hast thou forgot our articles?'

'Not know him!' replied the Friar, boldly, 'I know him as well as the beggar knows his dish.'

'And what is his name, then?' demanded Locksley.

'His name,' said the hermit—'his name is Sir Anthony of Scrabelstone; as if I would drink with a man, and did not know his name!'

'Thou hast been drinking more than enough, Friar,' said the woodsman, 'and, I fear, prating more than enough too.'

'Good yeoman,' said the knight, coming forward, 'be not wroth with my merry host. He did but afford me the hospitality which I would have compelled from him if he had refused it.'

'Thou compel!' said the Friar; 'wait but till I have changed this grey gown for a green cassock, and if I make not a quarter-

staff ring twelve upon thy pate, I am neither true clerk nor good woodsman.'

While he spoke thus, he stript off his gown, and appeared in a close black buckram doublet and drawers, over which he speedily did on a cassock of green and hose of the same colour. 'I pray thee, truss my points,' said he to Wamba, 'and thou shalt have a cup of sack for thy labour.'

'Gramercy for thy sack,' said Wamba; 'but think'st thou it is lawful for me to aid you to transmew thyself from a holy hermit into a sinful forester?'

'Never fear,' said the hermit; 'I will but confess the sins of my green cloak to my grey friar's frock, and all shall be well again.'

'Amen!' answered the Jester. 'A broadcloth penitent should have a sackcloth confessor, and your frock may absolve my motley doublet into the bargain.'

So saying, he accommodated the Friar with his assistance in tying the endless number of points, as the laces which attached the hose to the doublet were then termed.

While they were thus employed, Locksley led the knight a little apart, and addressed him thus: 'Deny it not, Sir Knight, you are he who decided the victory to the advantage of the English against the strangers on the second day of the tournament at Ashby.'

'And what follows if you guess truly, good yeoman?' replied the knight.

'I should in that case hold you,' replied the yeoman, 'a friend to the weaker party.'

'Such is the duty of a true knight at least,' replied the Black Champion; 'and I would not willingly that there were reason to think otherwise of me.'

'But for my purpose,' said the yeoman, 'thou shouldst be as well a good Englishman as a good knight; for that which I have to speak of concerns, indeed, the duty of every honest man, but is more especially that of a true-born native of England.'

'You can speak to no one,' replied the knight, 'to whom England, and the life of every Englishman, can be dearer than to me.'

'I would willingly believe so,' said the woodsman, 'for never had this country such need to be supported by those who love her. Hear me, and I will tell thee of an enterprise in which, if thou be'st really that which thou seemest, thou mayest take an honourable part. A band of villains, in the disguise of better men than themselves, have made themselves

master of the person of a noble Englishman, called Cedric the Saxon, together with his ward and his friend Athelstane of Coningsburgh, and have transported them to a castle in this forest called Torquilstone. I ask of thee, as a good knight and a good Englishman, wilt thou aid in their rescue ?

'I am bound by my vow to do so,' replied the knight ; 'but I would willingly know who you are, who request my assistance in their behalf ?'

'I am,' said the forester, 'a nameless man ; but I am the friend of my country, and of my country's friends. With this account of me you must for the present remain satisfied, the more especially, since you yourself desire to continue unknown. Believe, however, that my word, when pledged, is as inviolate as if I wore golden spurs.'

'I willingly believe it,' said the knight ; 'I have been accustomed to study men's countenances, and I can read in thine honesty and resolution. I will, therefore, ask thee no further questions, but aid thee in setting at freedom these oppressed captives ; which done, I trust we shall part better acquainted, and well satisfied with each other.'

'So,' said Wamba to Gurth ; for the Friar being now fully equipped, the Jester, having approached to the other side of the hut, had heard the conclusion of the conversation, 'so we have got a new ally ? I trust the valour of the knight will be truer metal than the religion of the hermit or the honesty of the yeoman ; for this Locksley looks like a born deer-stealer, and the priest like a lusty hypocrite.'

'Hold thy peace, Wamba,' said Gurth ; 'it may all be as thou dost guess ; but were the horned devil to rise and proffer me his assistance to set at liberty Cedric and the Lady Rowena, I fear I should hardly have religion enough to refuse the foul fiend's offer, and bid him get behind me.'

The Friar was now completely accoutred as a yeoman, with sword and buckler, bow and quiver, and a strong partizan over his shoulder. He left his cell at the head of the party, and, having carefully locked the door, deposited the key under the threshold.

'Art thou in condition to do good service, Friar,' said Locksley, 'or does the brown bowl still run in thy head ?'

'Not more than a draught of St. Dunstan's fountain will allay,' answered the priest ; 'something there is of a whizzing in my brain, and of instability in my legs, but you shall presently see both pass away.'

So saying, he stepped to the stone basin, in which the waters of the fountain as they fell formed bubbles which danced in the white moonlight, and took so long a draught as if he had meant to exhaust the spring.

'When didst thou drink as deep a draught of water before, Holy Clerk of Copmanhurst?' said the Black Knight.

'Never since my wine butt leaked, and let out its liquor by an illegal vent,' replied the Friar, 'and so left me nothing to drink but my patron's bounty here.'

Then plunging his hands and head into the fountain, he washed from them all marks of the midnight revel.

Thus refreshed and sobered, the jolly priest twirled his heavy partizan round his head with three fingers, as if he had been balancing a reed, exclaiming at the same time, 'Where be those false ravishers who carry off wenches against their will? May the foul fiend fly off with me, if I am not man enough for a dozen of them.'

'Swearest thou, Holy Clerk?' said the Black Knight.

'Clerk me no clerks,' replied the transformed priest; 'by St. George and the Dragon, I am no longer a shaveling than while my frock is on my back. When I am cased in my green cassock, I will drink, swear, and woo a lass with any blithe forester in the West Riding.'

'Come on, Jack Priest,' said Locksley, 'and be silent; thou art as noisy as a whole convent on a holy eve, when the Father Abbot has gone to bed. Come on you, too, my masters, tarry not to talk of it — I say, come on; we must collect all our forces, and few enough we shall have, if we are to storm the castle of Reginald Front-de-Boeuf.'

'What! is it Front-de-Boeuf,' said the Black Knight, 'who has stopt on the king's highway the king's liege subjects? Is he turned thief and oppressor?'

'Oppressor he ever was,' said Locksley.

'And for thief,' said the priest, 'I doubt if ever he were even half so honest a man as many a thief of my acquaintance.'

'Move on, priest, and be silent,' said the yeoman; 'it were better you led the way to the place of rendezvous than say what should be left unsaid, both in decency and prudence.'

CHAPTER XXI

Alas, how many hours and years have past,
Since human forms have round this table sate,
Or lamp, or taper, on its surface gleam'd !
Methinks, I hear the sound of time long pass'd
Still murmuring o'er us, in the lofty void
Of these dark arches, like the ling'ring voices
Of those who long within their graves have slept.

Orra, a Tragedy.

WHILE these measures were taking in behalf of Cedric and his companions, the armed men by whom the latter had been seized hurried their captives along towards the place of security where they intended to imprison them. But darkness came on fast, and the paths of the wood seemed but imperfectly known to the marauders. They were compelled to make several long halts, and once or twice to return on their road to resume the direction which they wished to pursue. The summer morn had dawned upon them ere they could travel in full assurance that they held the right path. But confidence returned with light, and the cavalcade now moved rapidly forward. Meanwhile, the following dialogue took place between the two leaders of the banditti :—

'It is time thou shouldst leave us, Sir Maurice,' said the Templar to De Bracy, 'in order to prepare the second part of thy mystery. Thou art next, thou knowest, to act the Knight Deliverer.'

'I have thought better of it,' said De Bracy ; 'I will not leave thee till the prize is fairly deposited in Front-de-Bœuf's castle. There will I appear before the Lady Rowena in mine own shape, and trust that she will set down to the vehemence of my passion the violence of which I have been guilty.'

'And what has made thee change thy plan, De Bracy ?' replied the Knight Templar.

'That concerns thee nothing,' answered his companion.

'I would hope, however, Sir Knight,' said the Templar,

'that this alteration of measures arises from no suspicion of my honourable meaning, such as Fitzurse endeavoured to instil into thee?'

'My thoughts are my own,' answered De Bracy; 'the fiend laughs, they say, when one thief robs another; and we know, that were he to spit fire and brimstone instead, it would never prevent a Templar from following his bent.'

'Or the leader of a Free Company,' answered the Templar, 'from dreading at the hands of a comrade and friend the injustice he does to all mankind.'

'This is unprofitable and perilous recrimination,' answered De Bracy; 'suffice it to say, I know the morals of the Temple Order, and I will not give thee the power of cheating me out of the fair prey for which I have run such risks.'

'Pshaw,' replied the Templar, 'what hast thou to fear? Thou knowest the vows of our order.'

'Right well,' said De Bracy, 'and also how they are kept. Come, Sir Templar, the laws of gallantry have a liberal interpretation in Palestine, and this is a case in which I will trust nothing to your conscience.'

'Hear the truth, then,' said the Templar; 'I care not for your blue-eyed beauty. There is in that train one who will make me a better mate.'

'What! wouldst thou stoop to the waiting damsel?' said De Bracy.

'No, Sir Knight,' said the Templar, haughtily. 'To the waiting-woman will I not stoop. I have a prize among the captives as lovely as thine own.'

'By the mass, thou meanest the fair Jewess!' said De Bracy.

'And if I do,' says Bois-Guilbert, 'who shall gainsay me?'

'No one that I know,' said De Bracy, 'unless it be your vow of celibacy or a check of conscience for an intrigue with a Jewess.'

'For my vow,' said the Templar, 'our Grand Master hath granted me a dispensation. And for my conscience, a man that has slain three hundred Saracens need not reckon up every little failing, like a village girl at her first confession upon Good Friday eve.'

'Thou knowest best thine own privileges,' said De Bracy. 'Yet, I would have sworn thy thoughts had been more on the old usurer's money-bags than on the black eyes of the daughter.'

'I can admire both,' answered the Templar; 'besides, the old Jew is but half-prize. I must share his spoils with Front-

de-Bœuf, who will not lend us the use of his castle for nothing. I must have something that I can term exclusively my own by this foray of ours, and I have fixed on the lovely Jewess as my peculiar prize. But, now thou knowest my drift, thou wilt resume thine own original plan, wilt thou not? Thou hast nothing, thou seest, to fear from my interference.'

'No,' replied De Bracy, 'I will remain beside my prize. What thou sayest is passing true, but I like not the privileges acquired by the dispensation of the Grand Master, and the merit acquired by the slaughter of three hundred Saracens. You have too good a right to a free pardon to render you very scrupulous about peccadilloes.'

While this dialogue was proceeding, Cedric was endeavouring to wring out of those who guarded him an avowal of their character and purpose. 'You should be Englishmen,' said he; 'and yet, sacred Heaven! you prey upon your countrymen as if you were very Normans. You should be my neighbours, and, if so, my friends; for which of my English neighbours have reason to be otherwise? I tell ye, yeomen, that even those among ye who have been branded with outlawry have had from me protection; for I have pitied their miseries, and curst the oppression of their tyrannic nobles. What, then, would you have of me? or in what can this violence serve ye? Ye are worse than brute beasts in your actions, and will you imitate them in their very dumbness?'

It was in vain that Cedric expostulated with his guards, who had too many good reasons for their silence to be induced to break it either by his wrath or his expostulations. They continued to hurry him along, travelling at a very rapid rate, until, at the end of an avenue of huge trees, arose Torquilstone, now the hoary and ancient castle of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf. It was a fortress of no great size, consisting of a donjon, or large and high square tower, surrounded by buildings of inferior height, which were encircled by an inner courtyard. Around the exterior wall was a deep moat, supplied with water from a neighbouring rivulet. Front-de-Bœuf, whose character placed him often at feud with his enemies, had made considerable additions to the strength of his castle, by building towers upon the outward wall, so as to flank it at every angle. The access, as usual in castles of the period, lay through an arched barbican, or outwork, which was terminated and defended by a small turret at each corner.

Cedric no sooner saw the turrets of Front-de-Bœuf's castle

raise their grey and moss-grown battlements, glimmering in the morning sun above the woods by which they were surrounded, than he instantly augured more truly concerning the cause of his misfortune.

'I did injustice,' he said, 'to the thieves and outlaws of these woods, when I supposed such banditti to belong to their bands; I might as justly have confounded the foxes of these brakes with the ravening wolves of France. Tell me, dogs, is it my life or my wealth that your master aims at? Is it too much that two Saxons, myself and the noble Athelstane, should hold land in the country which was once the patrimony of our race? Put us, then, to death, and complete your tyranny by taking our lives, as you began with our liberties. If the Saxon Cedric cannot rescue England, he is willing to die for her. Tell your tyrannical master, I do only beseech him to dismiss the Lady Rowena in honour and safety. She is a woman, and he need not dread her; and with us will die all who dare fight in her cause.'

The attendants remained as mute to this address as to the former, and they now stood before the gate of the castle. De Bracy winded his horn three times, and the archers and cross-bow men, who had manned the wall upon seeing their approach, hastened to lower the drawbridge and admit them. The prisoners were compelled by their guards to alight, and were conducted to an apartment where a hasty repast was offered them, of which none but Athelstane felt any inclination to partake. Neither had the descendant of the Confessor much time to do justice to the good cheer placed before them, for their guards gave him and Cedric to understand that they were to be imprisoned in a chamber apart from Rowena. Resistance was vain; and they were compelled to follow to a large room, which, rising on clumsy Saxon pillars, resembled those refectories and chapter-houses which may be still seen in the most ancient parts of our most ancient monasteries.

The Lady Rowena was next separated from her train, and conducted, with courtesy, indeed, but still without consulting her inclination, to a distant apartment. The same alarming distinction was conferred on Rebecca, in spite of her father's entreaties, who offered even money, in this extremity of distress, that she might be permitted to abide with him. 'Base unbeliever,' answered one of his guards, 'when thou hast seen thy lair, thou wilt not wish thy daughter to partake it.' And, without farther discussion, the old Jew was forcibly dragged off in a different direction from the other prisoners. The

domestics, after being carefully searched and disarmed, were confined in another part of the castle ; and Rowena was refused even the comfort she might have derived from the attendance of her handmaiden Elgitha.

The apartment in which the Saxon chiefs were confined, for to them we turn our first attention, although at present used as a sort of guard-room, had formerly been the great hall of the castle. It was now abandoned to meaner purposes, because the present lord, among other additions to the convenience, security, and beauty of his baronial residence, had erected a new and noble hall, whose vaulted roof was supported by lighter and more elegant pillars, and fitted up with that higher degree of ornament which the Normans had already introduced into architecture.

Cedric paced the apartment, filled with indignant reflections on the past and on the present, while the apathy of his companion served, instead of patience and philosophy, to defend him against everything save the inconvenience of the present moment ; and so little did he feel even this last, that he was only from time to time roused to a reply by Cedric's animated and impassioned appeal to him.

'Yes,' said Cedric, half speaking to himself and half addressing himself to Athelstane, 'it was in this very hall that my father feasted with Torquil Wolfsganger, when he entertained the valiant and unfortunate Harold, then advancing against the Norwegians, who had united themselves to the rebel Tosti. It was in this hall that Harold returned the magnanimous answer to the ambassador of his rebel brother. Oft have I heard my father kindle as he told the tale. The envoy of Tosti was admitted, when this ample room could scarce contain the crowd of noble Saxon leaders who were quaffing the blood-red wine around their monarch.'

'I hope,' said Athelstane, somewhat moved by this part of his friend's discourse, 'they will not forget to send us some wine and refectious at noon : we had scarce a breathing-space allowed to break our fast, and I never have the benefit of my food when I eat immediately after dismounting from horseback, though the leeches recommend that practice.'

Cedric went on with his story without noticing this interjectional observation of his friend.

'The envoy of Tosti,' he said, 'moved up the hall, undismayed by the frowning countenances of all around him, until he made his obeisance before the throne of King Harold.'

"What terms," he said, "Lord King, hath thy brother Tosti to hope, if he should lay down his arms and crave peace at thy hands?"

"A brother's love," cried the generous Harold, "and the fair earldom of Northumberland."

"But should Tosti accept these terms," continued the envoy, "what lands shall be assigned to his faithful ally, Hardrada, King of Norway?"

"Seven feet of English ground," answered Harold, fiercely, "or, as Hardrada is said to be a giant, perhaps we may allow him twelve inches more."

The hall rung with acclamations, and cup and horn was filled to the Norwegian, who should be speedily in possession of his English territory.

"I could have pledged him with all my soul," said Athelstane, "for my tongue cleaves to my palate."

The baffled envoy, continued Cedric, pursuing with animation his tale, though it interested not the listener, "retreated, to carry Tosti and his ally the ominous answer of his injured brother. It was then that the distant towers of York and the bloody streams of the Derwent¹ beheld that direful conflict, in which, after displaying the most undaunted valour, the King of Norway and Tosti both fell, with ten thousand of their bravest followers. Who would have thought that, upon the proud day when this battle was won, the very gale which waved the Saxon banners in triumph was filling the Norman sails, and impelling them to the fatal shores of Sussex? Who would have thought that Harold, within a few brief days, would himself possess no more of his kingdom than the share which he allotted in his wrath to the Norwegian invader? Who would have thought that you, noble Athelstane—that you, descended of Harold's blood, and that I, whose father was not the worst defender of the Saxon crown, should be prisoners to a vile Norman, in the very hall in which our ancestors held such high festival?"

"It is sad enough," replied Athelstane; "but I trust they will hold us to a moderate ransom. At any rate, it cannot be their purpose to starve us outright; and yet, although it is high noon, I see no preparations for serving dinner. Look up at the window, noble Cedric, and judge by the sunbeams if it is not on the verge of noon."

"It may be so," answered Cedric; "but I cannot look on that

¹ See Battle of Stamford. Note 11.

stained lattice without its awakening other reflections than those which concern the passing moment or its privations. When that window was wrought, my noble friend, our hardy fathers knew not the art of making glass, or of staining it. The pride of Wolfgang's father brought an artist from Normandy to adorn his hall with this new species of emblazonment, that breaks the golden light of God's blessed day into so many fantastic hues. The foreigner came here poor, beggarly, cringing, and subservient, ready to doff his cap to the meanest native of the household. He returned pampered and proud to tell his rapacious countrymen of the wealth and the simplicity of the Saxon nobles — a folly, oh Athelstane! foreboded of old, as well as foreseen by those descendants of Hengist and his hardy tribes who retained the simplicity of their manners. We made these strangers our bosom friends, our confidential servants; we borrowed their artists and their arts, and despised the honest simplicity and hardihood with which our brave ancestors supported themselves; and we became enervated by Norman arts long ere we fell under Norman arms. Far better was our homely diet, eaten in peace and liberty, than the luxurious dainties, the love of which hath delivered us as bondsmen to the foreign conqueror!

'I should,' replied Athelstane, 'hold very humble diet a luxury at present; and it astonishes me, noble Cedric, that you can bear so truly in mind the memory of past deeds, when it appeareth you forget the very hour of dinner.'

'It is time lost,' muttered Cedric apart and impatiently, 'to speak to him of aught else but that which concerns his appetite! The soul of Hardicanute hath taken possession of him, and he hath no pleasure save to fill, to swill, and to call for more. Alas!' said he, looking at Athelstane with compassion, 'that so dull a spirit should be lodged in so goodly a form! Alas! that such an enterprise as the regeneration of England should turn on a hinge so imperfect! Wedded to Rowena, indeed, her noble and more generous soul may yet awake the better nature which is torpid within him. Yet how should this be, while Rowena, Athelstane, and I myself remain the prisoners of this brutal marauder, and have been made so perhaps from a sense of the dangers which our liberty might bring to the usurped power of his nation?'

While the Saxon was plunged in these painful reflections, the door of their prison opened and gave entrance to a sewer, holding his white rod of office. This important person advanced

into the chamber with a grave pace, followed by four attendants, bearing in a table covered with dishes, the sight and smell of which seemed to be an instant compensation to Athelstane for all the inconvenience he had undergone. The persons who attended on the feast were masked and cloaked.

'What mummery is this?' said Cedric; 'think you that we are ignorant whose prisoners we are, when we are in the castle of your master? Tell him,' he continued, willing to use this opportunity to open a negotiation for his freedom — 'tell your master, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, that we know no reason he can have for withholding our liberty, excepting his unlawful desire to enrich himself at our expense. Tell him that we yield to his rapacity, as in similar circumstances we should do to that of a literal robber. Let him name the ransom at which he rates our liberty, and it shall be paid, providing the exaction is suited to our means.'

The sewer made no answer, but bowed his head.

'And tell Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf,' said Athelstane, 'that I send him my mortal defiance, and challenge him to combat with me, on foot or horseback, at any secure place, within eight days after our liberation; which, if he be a true knight, he will not, under these circumstances, venture to refuse or to delay.'

'I shall deliver to the knight your defiance,' answered the sewer; 'meanwhile I leave you to your food.'

The challenge of Athelstane was delivered with no good grace; for a large mouthful, which required the exercise of both jaws at once, added to a natural hesitation, considerably damped the effect of the bold defiance it contained. Still, however, his speech was hailed by Cedric as an incontestable token of reviving spirit in his companion, whose previous indifference had begun, notwithstanding his respect for Athelstane's descent, to wear out his patience. But he now cordially shook hands with him in token of his approbation, and was somewhat grieved when Athelstane observed, 'That he would fight a dozen such men as Front-de-Bœuf, if by so doing he could hasten his departure from a dungeon where they put so much garlic into their pottage.' Notwithstanding this intimation of a relapse into the apathy of sensuality, Cedric placed himself opposite to Athelstane, and soon showed that, if the distresses of his country could banish the recollection of food while the table was uncovered, yet no sooner were the victuals put there than he proved that the appetite of his

Saxon ancestors had descended to him along with their other qualities.

The captives had not long enjoyed their refreshment, however, ere their attention was disturbed even from this most serious occupation by the blast of a horn winded before the gate. It was repeated three times, with as much violence as if it had been blown before an enchanted castle by the destined knight at whose summons halls and towers, barbican and battlement, were to roll off like a morning vapour. The Saxons started from the table and hastened to the window. But their curiosity was disappointed; for these outlets only looked upon the court of the castle, and the sound came from beyond its precincts. The summons, however, seemed of importance, for a considerable degree of bustle instantly took place in the castle.

CHAPTER XXII

My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
O my Christian ducats!
Justice — the Law — my ducats and my daughter!

Merchant of Venice.

LEAVING the Saxon chiefs to return to their banquet as soon as their ungratified curiosity should permit them to attend to the calls of their half-satiated appetite, we have to look in upon the yet more severe imprisonment of Isaac of York. The poor Jew had been hastily thrown into a dungeon-vault of the castle, the floor of which was deep beneath the level of the ground, and very damp, being lower than even the moat itself. The only light was received through one or two loopholes far above the reach of the captive's hand. These apertures admitted, even at mid-day, only a dim and uncertain light, which was changed for utter darkness long before the rest of the castle had lost the blessing of day. Chains and shackles, which had been the portion of former captives, from whom active exertions to escape had been apprehended, hung rusted and empty on the walls of the prison, and in the rings of one of those sets of fetters there remained two mouldering bones, which seemed to have been once those of the human leg, as if the prisoner had been left not only to perish there, but to be consumed to a skeleton.

At one end of this ghastly apartment was a large fire-grate, over the top of which were stretched some transverse iron bars, half-devoured with rust.

The whole appearance of the dungeon might have appalled a stouter heart than that of Isaac, who, nevertheless, was more composed under the imminent pressure of danger than he had seemed to be while affected by terrors of which the cause was as yet remote and contingent. The lovers of the chase say that the hare feels more agony during the pursuit of the greyhounds than when she is struggling in their fangs.¹ And

¹ *Nota Bene.* — We by no means warrant the accuracy of this piece of natural history, which we give on the authority of the Wardour MS. — L. C.

thus it is probable that the Jews, by the very frequency of their fear on all occasions, had their minds in some degree prepared for every effort of tyranny which could be practised upon them; so that no aggression, when it had taken place, could bring with it that surprise which is the most disabling quality of terror. Neither was it the first time that Isaac had been placed in circumstances so dangerous. He had therefore experience to guide him, as well as hope that he might again, as formerly, be delivered as a prey from the fowler. Above all, he had upon his side the unyielding obstinacy of his nation, and that unbending resolution with which Israelites have been frequently known to submit to the uttermost evils which power and violence can inflict upon them, rather than gratify their oppressors by granting their demands.

In this humour of passive resistance, and with his garment collected beneath him to keep his limbs from the wet pavement, Isaac sat in a corner of his dungeon, where his folded hands, his dishevelled hair and beard, his furred cloak and high cap, seen by the wiry and broken light, would have afforded a study for Rembrandt, had that celebrated painter existed at the period. The Jew remained without altering his position for nearly three hours, at the expiry of which steps were heard on the dungeon stair. The bolts screamed as they were withdrawn, the hinges creaked as the wicket opened, and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, followed by the two Saracen slaves of the Templar, entered the prison.

Front-de-Bœuf, a tall and strong man, whose life had been spent in public war or in private feuds and broils, and who had hesitated at no means of extending his feudal power, had features corresponding to his character, and which strongly expressed the fiercer and more malignant passions of the mind. The scars with which his visage was scarred would, on features of a different cast, have excited the sympathy and veneration due to the marks of honourable valour; but, in the peculiar case of Front-de-Bœuf, they only added to the ferocity of his countenance, and to the dread which his presence inspired. This formidable baron was clad in a leathern doublet, fitted close to his body, which was frayed and soiled with the stains of his armour. He had no weapon, excepting a poniard at his belt, which served to counterbalance the weight of the bunch of rusty keys that hung at his right side.

The black slaves who attended Front-de-Bœuf were stripped of their gorgeous apparel, and attired in jerkins and trousers

of coarse linen, their sleeves being tucked up above the elbow, like those of butchers when about to exercise their functions in the slaughter-house. Each had in his hand a small pannier; and, when they entered the dungeon, they stopt at the door until Front-de-Bœuf himself carefully locked and double-locked it. Having taken this precaution, he advanced slowly up the apartment towards the Jew, upon whom he kept his eye fixed, as if he wished to paralyse him with his glance, as some animals are said to fascinate their prey. It seemed, indeed, as if the sullen and malignant eye of Front-de-Bœuf possessed some portion of that supposed power over his unfortunate prisoner. The Jew sat with his mouth agape, and his eyes fixed on the venge baron with such earnestness of terror that his frame seemed literally to shrink together, and to diminish in size while encountering the fierce Norman's fixed and baleful gaze. The unhappy Isaac was deprived not only of the power of rising to make the obeisance which his terror dictated, but he could not even doff his cap, or utter any word of supplication; so strongly was he agitated by the conviction that tortures and death were impending over him.

On the other hand, the stately form of the Norman appeared to dilate in magnitude, like that of the eagle, which ruffles up its plumage when about to pounce on its defenceless prey. He paused within three steps of the corner in which the unfortunate Jew had now, as it were, coiled himself up into the smallest possible space, and made a sign for one of the slaves to approach. The black satellite came forward accordingly, and, producing from his basket a large pair of scales and several weights, he laid them at the feet of Front-de-Bœuf, and again retired to the respectful distance at which his companion had already taken his station.

The motions of these men were slow and solemn, as if there impended over their souls some preconception of horror and of cruelty. Front-de-Bœuf himself opened the scene by thus addressing his ill-fated captive.

'Most accursed dog of an accursed race,' he said, awaking with his deep and sullen voice the sullen echoes of his dungeon-vault, 'seest thou these scales?'

The unhappy Jew returned a feeble affirmative.

'In these very scales shalt thou weigh me out,' said the relentless Baron, 'a thousand silver pounds, after the just measure and weight of the Tower of London.'

'Holy Abraham!' returned the Jew, finding voice through

the very extremity of his danger, 'heard man ever such a demand? Who ever heard, even in a minstrel's tale, of such a sum as a thousand pounds of silver? What human sight was ever blessed with the vision of such a mass of treasure? Not within the walls of York, ransack my house and that of all my tribe, wilt thou find the tithe of that huge sum of silver that thou speakest of.'

'I am reasonable,' answered Front-de-Bœuf, 'and if silver be scant, I refuse not gold. At the rate of a mark of gold for each six pounds of silver, thou shalt free thy unbelieving carcass from such punishment as thy heart has never even conceived.'

'Have mercy on me, noble knight!' exclaimed Isaac; 'I am old, and poor, and helpless. It were unworthy to triumph over me. It is a poor deed to crush a worm.'

'Old thou mayest be,' replied the knight; 'more shame to their folly who have suffered thee to grow grey in usury and knavery. Feeble thou mayest be, for when had a Jew either heart or hand. But rich it is well known thou art.'

'I swear to you, noble knight,' said the Jew, 'by all which I believe, and by all which we believe in common —'

'Perjure not thyself,' said the Norman, interrupting him, 'and let not thine obstinacy seal thy doom, until thou hast seen and well considered the fate that awaits thee. Think not I speak to thee only to excite thy terror, and practise on the base cowardice thou hast derived from thy tribe. I swear to thee by that which thou dost not believe, by the Gospel which our church teaches, and by the keys which are given her to bind and to loose, that my purpose is deep and peremptory. This dungeon is no place for trifling. Prisoners ten thousand times more distinguished than thou have died within these walls, and their fate hath never been known! But for thee is reserved a long and lingering death, to which theirs were luxury.'

He again made a signal for the slaves to approach, and spoke to them apart, in their own language; for he also had been in Palestine, where, perhaps, he had learnt his lesson of cruelty. The Saracens produced from their baskets a quantity of charcoal, a pair of bellows, and a flask of oil. While the one struck a light with a flint and steel, the other disposed the charcoal in the large rusty grate which we have already mentioned, and exercised the bellows until the fuel came to a red glow.

'Seest thou, Isaac,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'the range of iron

bars above that glowing charcoal!¹ On that warm couch thou shalt lie, stripped of thy clothes as if thou wert to rest on a bed of down. One of these slaves shall maintain the fire beneath thee, while the other shall anoint thy wretched limbs with oil, lest the roast should burn. Now, choose betwixt such a scorching bed and the payment of a thousand pounds of silver; for, by the head of my father, thou hast no other option.'

'It is impossible,' exclaimed the miserable Jew — 'it is impossible that your purpose can be real! The good God of nature never made a heart capable of exercising such cruelty!'

'Trust not to that, Isaac,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'it were a fatal error. Dost thou think that I, who have seen a town sacked, in which thousands of my Christian countrymen perished by sword, by flood, and by fire, will blench from my purpose for the outcries or screams of one single wretched Jew? Or thinkest thou that these swarthy slaves, who have neither law, country, nor conscience, but their master's will — who use the poison, or the stake, or the poniard, or the cord, at his slightest wink — thinkest thou that *they* will have mercy, who do not even understand the language in which it is asked? Be wise, old man; discharge thyself of a portion of thy superfluous wealth; repay to the hands of a Christian a part of what thou hast acquired by the usury thou hast practised on those of his religion. Thy cunning may soon swell out once more thy shrivelled purse, but neither leech nor medicine can restore thy scorched hide and flesh wert thou once stretched on these bars. Tell down thy ransom, I say, and rejoice that at such rate thou canst redeem thee from a dungeon the secrets of which few have returned to tell. I waste no more words with thee: choose between thy dross and thy flesh and blood, and as thou choosest, so shall it be.'

'So may Abraham, Jacob, and all the fathers of our people assist me,' said Isaac, 'I cannot make the choice, because I have not the means of satisfying your exorbitant demand!'

'Seize him and strip him, slaves,' said the knight, 'and let the fathers of his race assist him if they can.'

The assistants, taking their directions more from the Baron's eye and his hand than his tongue, once more stepped forward, laid hands on the unfortunate Isaac, plucked him up from the ground, and, holding him between them, waited the hard-hearted Baron's farther signal. The unhappy Jew eyed their

¹ See Torture. Note 12.

countenances and that of Front-de-Bœuf, in hope of discovering some symptoms of relenting ; but that of the Baron exhibited the same cold, half-sullen, half-sarcastic smile which had been the prelude to his cruelty ; and the savage eyes of the Saracens, rolling gloomily under their dark brows, acquiring a yet more sinister expression by the whiteness of the circle which surrounds the pupil, evinced rather the secret pleasure which they expected from the approaching scene than any reluctance to be its directors or agents. The Jew then looked at the glowing furnace over which he was presently to be stretched, and seeing no chance of his tormentor's relenting, his resolution gave way.

'I will pay,' he said, 'the thousand pounds of silver. That is,' he added, after a moment's pause, 'I will pay it with the help of my brethren ; for I must beg as a mendicant at the door of our synagogue ere I make up so unheard-of a sum. When and where must it be delivered ?'

'Here,' replied Front-de-Bœuf — 'here it must be delivered ; weighed it must be — weighed and told down on this very dungeon floor. Thinkest thou I will part with thee until thy ransom is secure ?'

'And what is to be my surety,' said the Jew, 'that I shall be at liberty after this ransom is paid ?'

'The word of a Norman noble, thou pawnbroking slave,' answered Front-de-Bœuf — 'the faith of a Norman nobleman, more pure than the gold and silver of thee and all thy tribe.'

'I crave pardon, noble lord,' said Isaac, timidly, 'but wherefore should I rely wholly on the word of one who will trust nothing to mine ?'

'Because thou canst not help it, Jew,' said the knight, sternly. 'Wert thou now in my treasure-chamber at York, and were I craving a loan of a hundred marks, it would be thine to dictate the time of payment and the pledge of security. This is my treasure-chamber. Here I have thee at advantage, nor will I again deign to repeat the terms on which I grant thee liberty.'

The Jew groaned deeply. 'Grant me,' he said, 'at least, with my own liberty, that of the companions with whom I travel. They scorned me as a Jew, yet they pitied my desolation, and because they tarried to aid me by the way a share of my evil hath come upon them ; moreover, they may contribute in some sort to my ransom.'

'If thou meanest yonder Saracen churls,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'their ransom will depend upon other terms than thine. Mind

thine own concerns, Jew, I warn thee, and meddle not with those of others.'

'I am, then,' said Isaac, 'only to be set at liberty, together with mine wounded friend?'

'Shall I twice recommend it,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'to a son of Israel, to meddle with his own concerns, and leave those of others alone? Since thou hast made thy choice, it remains but that thou payest down thy ransom, and that at a short day.'

'Yet hear me,' said the Jew, 'for the sake of that very wealth which thou wouldst obtain at the expense of thy ——' here he stopt short, afraid of irritating the savage Norman. But Front-de-Bœuf only laughed, and himself filled up the blank at which the Jew had hesitated. 'At the expense of my conscience, thou wouldst say, Isaac; speak it out — I tell thee I am reasonable. I can bear the reproaches of a loser, even when that loser is a Jew. Thou wert not so patient, Isaac, when thou didst invoke justice against Jacques Fitzdotterel, for calling thee a usurious blood-sucker, when thy exactions had devoured his patrimony.'

'I swear by the Talmud,' said the Jew, 'that your valour has been misled in that matter. Fitzdotterel drew his poniard upon me in mine own chamber, because I craved him for mine own silver. The term of payment was due at the Passover.'

'I care not what he did,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'the question is, when shall I have mine own? — when shall I have the shekels, Isaac?'

'Let my daughter Rebecca go forth to York,' answered Isaac, 'with your safe-conduct, noble knight, and so soon as man and horse can return, the treasure ——' here he groaned deeply, but added, after the pause of a few seconds — 'the treasure shall be told down on this very floor.'

'Thy daughter!' said Front-de-Bœuf, as if surprised, 'by heavens, Isaac, I would I had known of this. I deemed that yonder black-browed girl had been thy concubine, and I gave her to be a handmaiden to Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, after the fashion of patriarchs and heroes of the days of old, who set us in these matters a wholesome example.'

The yell which Isaac raised at this unfeeling communication made the very vault to ring, and astounded the two Saracens so much that they let go their hold of the Jew. He availed himself of his enlargement to throw himself on the pavement and clasp the knees of Front-de-Bœuf.

'Take all that you have asked,' said he, 'Sir Knight; take

ten times more — reduce me to ruin and to beggary, if thou wilt, — nay, pierce me with thy poniard, broil me on that furnace ; but spare my daughter, deliver her in safety and honour. As thou art born of woman, spare the honour of a helpless maiden. She is the image of my deceased Rachael — she is the last of six pledges of her love. Will you deprive a widowed husband of his sole remaining comfort ? Will you reduce a father to wish that his only living child were laid beside her dead mother, in the tomb of our fathers ?

‘I would,’ said the Norman, somewhat relenting, ‘that I had known of this before. I thought your race had loved nothing save their money-bags.’

‘Think not so vilely of us, Jews though we be,’ said Isaac, *rather* to improve the moment of apparent sympathy ; ‘the sted fox, the tortured wild-cat loves its young — the despised and persecuted race of Abraham love their children !’

‘Be it so,’ said Front-de-Bœuf ; ‘I will believe it in future, Isaac, for thy very sake. But it aids us not now ; I cannot help what has happened, or what is to follow : my word is passed to my comrade in arms, nor would I break it for ten Jews and Jewesses to boot. Besides, why shouldst thou think evil is to come to the girl, even if she became Bois-Guilbert’s booty ?’

‘There will — there must !’ exclaimed Isaac, wringing his hands in agony ; ‘when did Templars breathe aught but cruelty to men and dishonour to women !’

‘Dog of an infidel,’ said Front-de-Bœuf, with sparkling eyes, and not sorry, perhaps, to seize a pretext for working himself into a passion, ‘blaspheme not the Holy Order of the Temple of Zion, but take thought instead to pay me the ransom thou hast promised, or woe betide thy Jewish throat !’

‘Robber and villain !’ said the Jew, retorting the insults of his oppressor with passion, which, however impotent, he now found it impossible to bridle, ‘I will pay thee nothing — not one silver penny will I pay thee — unless my daughter is delivered to me in safety and honour !’

‘Art thou in thy senses, Israelite ?’ said the Norman, sternly ; ‘has thy flesh and blood a charm against heated iron and scalding oil ?’

‘I care not !’ said the Jew, rendered desperate by paternal affection ; ‘do thy worst. My daughter is my flesh and blood, dearer to me a thousand times than those limbs which thy cruelty threatens. No silver will I give thee, unless I were to pour it molten down thy avaricious throat ; no, not a silver

penny will I give thee, Nazarene, were it to save thee from the deep damnation thy whole life has merited ! 'Take my life if thou wilt, and say the Jew, amidst his tortures, knew how to disappoint the Christian.'

'We shall see that,' said Front-de-Bœuf ; 'for by the blessed rood, which is the abomination of thy accursed tribe, thou shalt feel the extremities of fire and steel ! Strip him, slaves, and chain him down upon the bars.'

In spite of the feeble struggles of the old man, the Saracens had already torn from him his upper garment, and were proceeding totally to disrobe him, when the sound of a bugle, twice winded without the castle, penetrated even to the recesses of the dungeon, and immediately after loud voices were heard calling for Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf. Unwilling to be found engaged in his hellish occupation, the savage Baron gave the slaves a signal to restore Isaac's garment, and quitting the dungeon with his attendants, he left the Jew to thank God for his own deliverance, or to lament over his daughter's captivity and probable fate, as his personal or parental feelings might prove strongest.

CHAPTER XXIII

Nay, if the gentle spirit of moving words
Can no way change you to a milder form,
I'll woo you, like a soldier, at arms' end,
And love you 'gainst the nature of love, force you.

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

THE apartment to which the Lady Rowena had been introduced was fitted up with some rude attempts at ornament and magnificence, and her being placed there might be considered as a peculiar mark of respect not offered to the other prisoners. But the wife of Front-de-Bœuf, for whom it had been originally furnished, was long dead, and decay and neglect had impaired the few ornaments with which her taste had adorned it. The tapestry hung down from the walls in many places, and in others was tarnished and faded under the effects of the sun, or tattered and decayed by age. Desolate, however, as it was, this was the apartment of the castle which had been judged most fitting for the accommodation of the Saxon heiress; and here she was left to meditate upon her fate, until the actors in this nefarious drama had arranged the several parts which each of them was to perform. This had been settled in a council held by Front-de-Bœuf, De Bracy, and the Templar, in which, after a long and warm debate concerning the several advantages which each insisted upon deriving from his peculiar share in this audacious enterprise, they had at length determined the fate of their unhappy prisoners.

It was about the hour of noon, therefore, when De Bracy, for whose advantage the expedition had been first planned, appeared to prosecute his views upon the hand and possessions of the Lady Rowena.

The interval had not entirely been bestowed in holding council with his confederates, for De Bracy had found leisure to decorate his person with all the foppery of the times. His green cassock and vizard were now flung aside. His long

luxuriant hair was trained to flow in quaint tresses down his richly furred cloak. His beard was closely shaved, his doublet reached to the middle of his leg, and the girdle which secured it, and at the same time supported his ponderous sword, was embroidered and embossed with gold work. We have already noticed the extravagant fashion of the shoes at this period, and the points of Maurice de Bracy's might have challenged the prize of extravagance with the gayest, being turned up and twisted like the horns of a ram. Such was the dress of a gallant of the period; and, in the present instance, that effect was aided by the handsome person and good demeanour of the wearer, whose manners partook alike of the grace of a courtier and the frankness of a soldier.

He saluted Rowena by doffing his velvet bonnet, garnished with a golden brooch, representing St. Michael trampling down the Prince of Evil. With this, he gently motioned the lady to a seat; and, as she still retained her standing posture, the knight ungloved his right hand, and motioned to conduct her thither. But Rowena declined, by her gesture, the proffered compliment, and replied, 'If I be in the presence of my jailor, Sir Knight — nor will circumstances allow me to think otherwise — it best becomes his prisoner to remain standing till she learns her doom.'

'Alas! fair Rowena,' returned De Bracy, 'you are in presence of your captive, not your jailor; and it is from your fair eyes that De Bracy must receive that doom which you fondly expect from him.'

'I know you not, sir,' said the lady, drawing herself up with all the pride of offended rank and beauty — 'I know you not; and the insolent familiarity with which you apply to me the jargon of a troubadour forms no apology for the violence of a robber.'

'To thyself, fair maid,' answered De Bracy, in his former tone — 'to thine own charms be ascribed what'er I have done which passed the respect due to her whom I have chosen queen of my heart and loadstar of my eyes.'

'I repeat to you, Sir Knight, that I know you not, and that no man wearing chain and spurs ought thus to intrude himself upon the presence of an unprotected lady.'

'That I am unknown to you,' said De Bracy, 'is indeed my misfortune; yet let me hope that De Bracy's name has not been always unspoken when minstrels or heralds have praised deeds of chivalry, whether in the lists or in the battlefield.'

'To heralds and to minstrels, then, leave thy praise, Sir Knight,' replied Rowena, 'more suiting for their mouths than for thine own; and tell me which of them shall record in song, or in book of tourney, the memorable conquest of this night, a conquest obtained over an old man, followed by a few timid hinds; and its booty, an unfortunate maiden transported against her will to the castle of a robber!'

You are unjust, Lady Rowena,' said the knight, biting his lips in some confusion, and speaking in a tone more natural to him than that of affected gallantry which he had at first adopted; 'yourself free from passion, you can allow no excuse for the frenzy of another, although caused by your own beauty.'

'I pray you, Sir Knight,' said Rowena, 'to cease a language so commonly used by strolling minstrels that it becomes not the mouth of knights or nobles. Certes, you constrain me to sit down, since you enter upon such commonplace terms, of which each vile crowder hath a stock that might last from hence to Christmas.'

'Proud damsel,' said De Bracy, incensed at finding his gallant style procured him nothing but contempt - 'proud damsel, thou shalt be as proudly encountered. Know, then, that I have supported my pretensions to your hand in the way that best suited thy character. It is meet for thy humour to be wooed with bow and bill than in set terms and in courtly language.'

'Courtesy of tongue,' said Rowena, 'when it is used to veil churlishness of deed, is but a knight's girdle around the breast of a base clown. I wonder not that the restraint appears to gall you: more it were for your honour to have retained the dress and language of an outlaw than to veil the deeds of one under an affectation of gentle language and demeanour.'

'You counsel well, lady,' said the Norman; 'and in the bold language which best justifies bold action, I tell thee, thou shalt never leave this castle, or thou shalt leave it as Maurice de Bracy's wife. I am not wont to be baffled in my enterprises, nor needs a Norman noble scrupulously to vindicate his conduct to the Saxon maiden whom he distinguishes by the offer of his hand. Thou art proud, Rowena, and thou art the fitter to be my wife. By what other means couldst thou be raised to high honour and to princely place, saving by my alliance? How else wouldst thou escape from the mean precincts of a country grange, where Saxons herd with the swine which form their wealth, to take thy seat, honoured as thou shouldst be, and

shalt be, amid all in England that is distinguished by beauty or dignified by power ?

'Sir Knight,' replied Rowena, 'the grange which you contemn hath been my shelter from infancy ; and, trust me, when I leave it—should that day ever arrive—it shall be with one who has not learnt to despise the dwelling and manners in which I have been brought up.'

'I guess your meaning, lady,' said De Bracy, 'though you may think it lies too obscure for my apprehension. But dream not that Richard Cœur-de-Lion will ever resume his throne, far less that Wilfred of Ivanhoe, his minion, will ever lead thee to his footstool, to be there welcomed as the bride of a favourite. Another suitor might feel jealousy while he touched this string ; but my firm purpose cannot be changed by a passion so childish and so hopeless. Know, lady, that this rival is in my power, and that it rests but with me to betray the secret of his being within the castle to Front-de-Bœuf, whose jealousy will be more fatal than mine.'

'Wilfred here !' said Rowena, in disdain ; 'that is as true as that Front-de-Bœuf is his rival.'

De Bracy looked at her steadily for an instant. 'Wert thou really ignorant of this ?' said he ; 'didst thou not know that Wilfred of Ivanhoe travelled in the litter of the Jew ?—a meet conveyance for the crusader whose doughty arm was to conquer the Holy Sepulchre !' And he laughed scornfully.

'And if he is here,' said Rowena, compelling herself to a tone of indifference, though trembling with an agony of apprehension which she could not suppress, 'in what is he the rival of Front-de-Bœuf ? or what has he to fear beyond a short imprisonment and an honourable ransom, according to the use of chivalry ?'

'Rowena,' said De Bracy, 'art thou, too, deceived by the common error of thy sex, who think there can be no rivalry but that respecting their own charms ? Knowest thou not there is a jealousy of ambition and of wealth, as well as of love ; and that this our host, Front-de-Bœuf, will push from his road him who opposes his claim to the fair barony of Ivanhoe as readily, eagerly, and unscrupulously as if he were preferred to him by some blue-eyed damsel ? But smile on my suit, lady, and the wounded champion shall have nothing to fear from Front-de-Bœuf, whom else thou mayest mourn for, as in the hands of one who has never shown compassion.'

'Save him, for the love of Heaven!' said Rowena, her firmness giving way under terror for her lover's impending fate.

'I can — I will — it is my purpose,' said De Bracy; 'for, when Rowena consents to be the bride of De Bracy, who is it shall dare to put forth a violent hand upon her kinsman — the son of her guardian — the companion of her youth? But it is thy love must buy his protection. I am not romantic fool enough to further the fortune, or avert the fate, of one who is likely to be a successful obstacle between me and my wishes. Use thine influence with me in his behalf, and he is safe; refuse to employ it, Wilfred dies, and thou thyself art not the nearer to freedom.'

'Thy language,' answered Rowena, 'hath in its indifferent bluntness something which cannot be reconciled with the horrors it seems to express. I believe not that thy purpose is so wicked, or thy power so great.'

'Flatter thyself, then, with that belief,' said De Bracy, 'until time shall prove it false. Thy lover lies wounded in this castle — thy preferred lover. He is a bar betwixt Front-de-Bœuf and that which Front-de-Bœuf loves better than either ambition or beauty. What will it cost beyond the blow of a poniard, or the thrust of a javelin, to silence his opposition for ever? Nay, were Front-de-Bœuf afraid to justify a deed so open, let the leech but give his patient a wrong draught, let the chamberlain, or the nurse who tends him, but pluck the pillow from his head, and Wilfred, in his present condition, is sped without the effusion of blood. Cedric also —'

'And Cedric also,' said Rowena, repeating his words — 'my noble — my generous guardian! I deserved the evil I have encountered, for forgetting his fate even in that of his son!'

'Cedric's fate also depends upon thy determination,' said De Bracy, 'and I leave thee to form it.'

Hitherto, Rowena had sustained her part in this trying scene with undismayed courage, but it was because she had not considered the danger as serious and imminent. Her disposition was naturally that which physiognomists consider as proper to fair complexions — mild, timid, and gentle; but it had been tempered, and, as it were, hardened, by the circumstances of her education. Accustomed to see the will of all, even of Cedric himself — sufficiently arbitrary with others — give way before her wishes, she had acquired that sort of courage and self-confidence which arises from the habitual and constant deference of the circle in which we move. She could scarce con-

ceive the possibility of her will being opposed, far less that of its being treated with total disregard.

Her haughtiness and habit of domination was, therefore, a fictitious character, induced over that which was natural to her, and it deserted her when her eyes were opened to the extent of her own danger, as well as that of her lover and her guardian; and when she found her will, the slightest expression of which was wont to command respect and attention, now placed in opposition to that of a man of a strong, fierce, and determined mind, who possessed the advantage over her, and was resolved to use it, she quailed before him.

After casting her eyes around, as if to look for the aid which was nowhere to be found, and after a few broken interjections, she raised her hands to heaven, and burst into a passion of uncontrolled vexation and sorrow. It was impossible to see so beautiful a creature in such extremity without feeling for her, and De Bracy was not unmoved, though he was yet more embarrassed than touched. He had, in truth, gone too far to recede; and yet, in Rowena's present condition, she could not be acted on either by arguments or threats. He paced the apartment to and fro, now vainly exhorting the terrified maiden to compose herself, now hesitating concerning his own line of conduct.

'If,' thought he, 'I should be moved by the tears and sorrow of this disconsolate damsel, what should I reap but the loss of those fair hopes for which I have encountered so much risk, and the ridicule of Prince John and his jovial comrades? And yet,' he said to himself, 'I feel myself ill framed for the part which I am playing. I cannot look on so fair a face while it is disturbed with agony, or on those eyes when they are drowned in tears. I would she had retained her original haughtiness of disposition, or that I had a larger share of Front-de-Bœuf's thrice-tempered hardness of heart!'

Agitated by these thoughts, he could only bid the unfortunate Rowena be comforted, and assure her that as yet she had no reason for the excess of despair to which she was now giving way. But in this task of consolation De Bracy was interrupted by the horn, 'hoarse-winded blowing far and keen,' which had at the same time alarmed the other inmates of the castle, and interrupted their several plans of avarice and of license. Of them all, perhaps, De Bracy least regretted the interruption; for his conference with the Lady Rowena had arrived at a point where he found it equally difficult to prosecute or to resign his enterprise.

And here we cannot but think it necessary to offer some better proof than the incidents of an idle tale to vindicate the melancholy representation of manners which has been just laid before the reader. It is grievous to think that those valiant barons, to whose stand against the crown the liberties of England were indebted for their existence, should themselves have been such dreadful oppressors, and capable of excesses contrary not only to the laws of England, but to those of nature and humanity. But, alas! we have only to extract from the industrious Henry one of those numerous passages which he has collected from contemporary historians, to prove that fiction itself can hardly reach the dark reality of the horrors of the period.

The description given by the author of the *Saxon Chronicle* of the cruelties exercised in the reign of King Stephen by the great barons and lords of castles, who were all Normans, affords a strong proof of the excesses of which they were capable when their passions were inflamed. 'They grievously oppressed the poor people by building castles; and when they were built, they filled them with wicked men, or rather devils, who seized both men and women who they imagined had any money, threw them into prison, and put them to more cruel tortures than the martyrs ever endured. They suffocated some in mud, and suspended others by the feet, or the head, or the thumbs, kindling fires below them. They squeezed the heads of some with knotted cords till they pierced their brains, while they threw others into dungeons swarming with serpents, snakes, and toads.' But it would be cruel to put the reader to the pain of perusing the remainder of this description.¹

As another instance of these bitter fruits of conquest, and perhaps the strongest that can be quoted, we may mention, that the Princess Matilda, though a daughter of the King of Scotland, and afterwards both Queen of England, niece to Edgar Atheling, and mother to the Empress of Germany, the daughter, the wife, and the mother of monarchs, was obliged, during her early residence for education in England, to assume the veil of a nun, as the only means of escaping the licentious pursuit of the Norman nobles. This excuse she stated before a great council of the clergy of England, as the sole reason for her having taken the religious habit. The assembled clergy admitted the validity of the plea, and the notoriety of the circumstances upon which it was founded; giving thus an indub-

¹ Henry's *Hist.*, edit. 1805, vol. vii. p. 346.

able and most remarkable testimony to the existence of that disgraceful license by which that age was stained. It was a matter of public knowledge, they said, that after the conquest of King William, his Norman followers, elated by so great a victory, acknowledged no law but their own wicked pleasure, and not only despoiled the conquered Saxons of their lands and their goods, but invaded the honour of their wives and of their daughters with the most unbridled license; and hence it was then common for matrons and maidens of noble families to assume the veil, and take shelter in convents, not as called thither by the vocation of God, but solely to preserve their honour from the unbridled wickedness of man.

Such and so licentious were the times, as announced by the public declaration of the assembled clergy, recorded by Eadmer; and we need add nothing more to vindicate the probability of the scenes which we have detailed, and are about to detail, upon the more apocryphal authority of the Waldour MS.

CHAPTER XXIV

I'll woo her as the lion woos his bride.

Douglas.

WHILE the scenes we have described were passing in other parts of the castle, the Jewess Rebecca awaited her fate in a distant and sequestered turret. Hither she had been led by two of her disguised ravishers, and on being thrust into the little cell, she found herself in the presence of an old sibyl, who kept murmuring to herself a Saxon rhyme, as if to beat time to the revolving dance which her spindle was performing upon the floor. The hag raised her head as Rebecca entered, and scowled at the fair Jewess with the malignant envy which old age and ugliness, when united with evil conditions, are apt to look upon youth and beauty.

'Thou must up and away, old house-cricket,' said one of the men; 'our noble master commands it. Thou must leave this chamber to a fairer guest.'

'Ay,' grumbled the hag, 'even thus is service requited. I have known when my bare word would have cast the best man-at-arms among ye out of saddle and out of service; and now must I up and away at the command of every groom such as thou.'

'Good Dame Urfried,' said the other man, 'stand not to reason on it, but up and away. Lords' hests must be listened to with a quick ear. Thou hast had thy day, old dame, but thy sun has long been set. Thou art now the very emblem of an old war-horse turned out on the barren heath; thou hast had thy paces in thy time, but now a broken amble is the best of them. Come, amble off with thee.'

'Ill omens dog ye both!' said the old woman; 'and a kennel be your burying-place! May the evil demon Zerneck tear me limb from limb, if I leave my own cell ere I have spun out the hemp on my distaff!'

'Answer it to our lord, then, old house-fiend,' said the man, and retired, leaving Rebecca in company with the old woman, upon whose presence she had been thus unwillingly forced.

'What devil's deed have they now in the wind?' said the old hag, murmuring to herself, yet from time to time casting a sidelong and malignant glance at Rebecca; 'but it is easy to guess. Bright eyes, black locks, and a skin like paper, ere the priest stains it with his black ungent! Ay, it is easy to guess why they send her to this lone turret, whence a shriek could no more be heard than at the depth of five hundred fathoms beneath the earth. Thou wilt have owls for thy neighbours, fair one; and their screams will be heard as far, and as much regarded, as thine own. Outlandish, too,' she said, marking the dress and turban of Rebecca. 'What country art thou of? — a Saracen or an Egyptian? Why dost not answer? Thou canst weep, canst thou not speak?'

'Be not angry, good mother,' said Rebecca.

'Thou needst say no more,' replied Urfried; 'men know a fox by the train, and a Jewess by her tongue.'

'For the sake of mercy,' said Rebecca, 'tell me what I am to expect as the conclusion of the violence which hath dragged me hither! Is it my life they seek, to atone for my religion? I will lay it down cheerfully.'

'Thy life, minion!' answered the sibyl; 'what would taking thy life pleasure them? Trust me, thy life is in no peril. Such usage shalt thou have as was once thought good enough for a noble Saxon maiden. And shall a Jewess like thee repine because she hath no better? Look at me. I was as young and twice as fair as thou, when Front-de-Bœuf, father of this Reginald, and his Normans, stormed this castle. My father and his seven sons defended their inheritance from story to story, from chamber to chamber. There was not a room, not a step of the stair, that was not slippery with their blood. They died — they died every man; and ere their bodies were cold, and ere their blood was dried, I had become the prey and the scorn of the conqueror!'

'Is there no help? Are there no means of escape?' said Rebecca. 'Richly — richly would I requite thine aid.'

'Think not of it,' said the hag; 'from hence there is no escape but through the gates of death; and it is late — late,' she added, shaking her grey head, 'ere these open to us. Yet it is comfort to think that we leave behind us on earth those

who shall be wretched as ourselves. Fare thee well, Jewess ! Jew or Gentile, thy fate would be the same ; for thou hast to do with them that have neither scruple nor pity. Fare thee well, I say. My thread is spun out ; thy task is yet to begin.'

'Stay ! stay ! for Heaven's sake !' said Rebecca — 'stay, though it be to curse and revile me ; thy presence is yet some protection.'

'The presence of the mother of God were no protection,' answered the old woman. 'There she stands,' pointing to a rude image of the Virgin Mary, 'see if she can avert the fate that awaits thee.'

She left the room as she spoke, her features writhed into a sort of sneering laugh, which made them seem even more hideous than their habitual frown. She locked the door behind her, and Rebecca might hear her curse every step for its steepness, as slowly and with difficulty she descended the turret stairs.

Rebecca was now to expect a fate even more dreadful than that of Rowena ; for what probability was there that either softness or ceremony would be used towards one of her oppressed race, whatever shadow of these might be preserved towards a Saxon heiress ? Yet had the Jewess this advantage, that she was better prepared by habits of thought, and by natural strength of mind, to encounter the dangers to which she was exposed. Of a strong and observing character, even from her earliest years, the pomp and wealth which her father displayed within his walls, or which she witnessed in the houses of other wealthy Hebrews, had not been able to blind her to the precarious circumstances under which they were enjoyed. Like Damocles at his celebrated banquet, Rebecca perpetually beheld, amid that gorgeous display, the sword which was suspended over the heads of her people by a single hair. These reflections had tamed and brought down to a pitch of sounder judgment a temper which, under other circumstances, might have waxed haughty, supercilious, and obstinate.

From her father's example and injunctions, Rebecca had learnt to bear herself courteously towards all who approached her. She could not indeed imitate his excess of subservience, because she was a stranger to the meanness of mind and to the constant state of timid apprehension by which it was dictated ; but she bore herself with a proud humility, as if submitting to the evil circumstances in which she was placed as the daughter of a despised race, while she felt in her mind the consciousness

that she was entitled to hold a higher rank from her merit than the arbitrary despotism of religious prejudice permitted her to aspire to.

Thus prepared to expect adverse circumstances, she had acquired the firmness necessary for acting under them. Her present situation required all her presence of mind, and she summoned it up accordingly.

Her first care was to inspect the apartment; but it afforded few hopes either of escape or protection. It contained neither secret passage nor trap-door, and, unless where the door by which she had entered joined the main building, seemed to be circumscribed by the round exterior wall of the turret. The door had no inside bolt or bar. The single window opened upon an embattled space surmounting the turret, which gave Rebecca, at first sight, some hopes of escaping; but she soon found it had no communication with any other part of the battlements, being an isolated bartizan, or balcony, secured, as usual, by a parapet, with embrasures, at which a few archers might be stationed for defending the turret, and flanking with their shot the wall of the castle on that side.

There was therefore no hope but in passive fortitude, and in that strong reliance on Heaven natural to great and generous characters. Rebecca, however erroneously taught to interpret the promises of Scripture to the chosen people of Heaven, did not err in supposing the present to be their hour of trial, or in trusting that the children of Zion would be one day called in with the fulness of the Gentiles. In the meanwhile, all around her showed that their present state was that of punishment and probation, and that it was their especial duty to suffer without sinning. Thus prepared to consider herself as the victim of misfortune, Rebecca had early reflected upon her own state, and schooled her mind to meet the dangers which she had probably to encounter.

The prisoner trembled, however, and changed colour, when a step was heard on the stair, and the door of the turret-chamber slowly opened, and a tall man, dressed as one of those banditti to whom they owed their misfortune, slowly entered, and shut the door behind him; his cap, pulled down upon his brows, concealed the upper part of his face, and he held his mantle in such a manner as to muffle the rest. In this guise, as if prepared for the execution of some deed, at the thought of which he was himself ashamed, he stood before the affrighted prisoner; yet, ruffian as his dress bespoke him, he seemed at a

loss to express what purpose had brought him thither, so that Rebecca, making an effort upon herself, had time to anticipate his explanation. She had already unclasped two costly bracelets and a collar, which she hastened to proffer to the supposed outlaw, concluding naturally that to gratify his avarice was to bespeak his favour.

'Take these,' she said, 'good friend, and for God's sake be merciful to me and my aged father! These ornaments are of value, yet are they trifling to what he would bestow to obtain our dismissal from this castle free and uninjured.'

'Fair flower of Palestine,' replied the outlaw, 'these pearls are orient, but they yield in whiteness to your teeth; the diamonds are brilliant, but they cannot match your eyes; and ever since I have taken up this wild trade, I have made a vow to prefer beauty to wealth.'

'Do not do yourself such wrong,' said Rebecca; 'take ransom, and have mercy! Gold will purchase you pleasure; to misuse us could only bring thee remorse. My father will willingly satiate thy utmost wishes; and if thou wilt act wisely, thou mayest purchase with our spoils thy restoration to civil society — mayest obtain pardon for past errors, and be placed beyond the necessity of committing more.'

'It is well spoken,' replied the outlaw in French, finding it difficult probably to sustain in Saxon a conversation which Rebecca had opened in that language; 'but know, bright lily of the vale of Baca! that thy father is already in the hands of a powerful alchemist, who knows how to convert into gold and silver even the rusty bars of a dungeon grate. The venerable Isaac is subjected to an alembic which will distil from him all he holds dear, without any assistance from my requests or thy entreaty. Thy ransom must be paid by love and beauty, and in no other coin will I accept it.'

'Thou art no outlaw,' said Rebecca, in the same language in which he addressed her; 'no outlaw had refused such offers. No outlaw in this land uses the dialect in which thou hast spoken. Thou art no outlaw, but a Norman — a Norman, noble perhaps in birth. O, be so in thy actions, and cast off this fearful mask of outrage and violence!'

'And thou, who canst guess so truly,' said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, dropping the mantle from his face, 'art no true daughter of Israel, but in all save youth and beauty a very witch of Endor. I am not an outlaw then, fair rose of Sharon. And I am one who will be more prompt to hang thy neck and

arms with pearls and diamonds, which so well become them, than to deprive thee of these ornaments.'

'What wouldst thou have of me,' said Rebecca, 'if not my wealth? We can have nought in common between us; you are a Christian, I am a Jewess. Our union were contrary to the laws alike of the church and the synagogue.'

'It were so, indeed,' replied the Templar, laughing. 'Wed with a Jewess! *Despardieu*! Not if she were the Queen of Sheba! And know, besides, sweet daughter of Zion, that were the most Christian king to offer me his most Christian daughter, with Languedoc for a dowry, I could not wed her. It is against my vow to love any maiden, otherwise than *par amours*, as I will love thee. I am a Templar. Behold the cross of my holy order.'

'Darest thou appeal to it,' said Rebecca, 'on an occasion like the present?'

'And if I do so,' said the Templar, 'it concerns not thee, who art no believer in the blessed sign of our salvation.'

'I believe as my fathers taught,' said Rebecca; 'and may God forgive my belief if erroneous! But you, Sir Knight, what is *yours*, when you appeal without scruple to that which you deem most holy, even while you are about to transgress the most solemn of your vows as a knight and as a man of religion?'

'It is gravely and well preached, O daughter of Sirach,' answered the Templar; 'but, gentle Ecclesiastica, thy narrow Jewish prejudices make thee blind to our high privilege. Marriage were an enduring crime on the part of a Templar; but what lesser folly I may practice, I shall speedily be absolved from at the next preceptory of our order. Not the wisest of monarchs, not his father, whose examples you must needs allow are weighty, claimed wider privileges than we poor soldiers of the Temple of Zion have won by our zeal in its defence. The protectors of Solomon's temple may claim license by the example of Solomon.'

'If thou readest the Scripture,' said the Jewess, 'and the lives of the saints, only to justify thine own license and profligacy, thy crime is like that of him who extracts poison from the most healthful and necessary herbs.'

The eyes of the Templar flashed fire at this reproof. 'Hearken,' he said, 'Rebecca; I have hitherto spoken mildly to thee, but now my language shall be that of a conqueror. Thou art the captive of my bow and spear, subject to my

will by the laws of all nations; nor will I abate an inch of my right, or abstain from taking by violence what thou refusest to entreaty or necessity.'

'Stand back,' said Rebecca — 'stand back, and hear me ere thou offerest to commit a sin so deadly! My strength thou mayest indeed overpower, for God made women weak, and trusted their defence to man's generosity. But I will proclaim thy villainy, Templar, from one end of Europe to the other. I will owe to the superstition of thy brethren what their compassion might refuse me. Each preceptory — each chapter of thy order, shall learn that, like a heretic, thou hast sinned with a Jewess. Those who tremble not at thy crime will hold thee accursed for having so far dishonoured the cross thou wearest as to follow a daughter of my people.'

'Thou art keen-witted, Jewess,' replied the Templar, well aware of the truth of what she spoke, and that the rules of his order condemned in the most positive manner, and under high penalties, such intrigues as he now prosecuted, and that in some instances even degradation had followed upon it — 'thou art sharp-witted,' he said; 'but loud must be thy voice of complaint if it is heard beyond the iron walls of this castle; within these, murmurs, laments, appeals to justice, and screams for help die alike silent away. One thing only can save thee, Rebecca. Submit to thy fate, embrace our religion, and thou shalt go forth in such state that many a Norman lady shall yield as well in pomp as in beauty to the favourite of the best lance among the defenders of the Temple.'

'Submit to my fate!' said Rebecca; 'and, sacred Heaven! to what fate? Embrace thy religion! and what religion can it be that harbours such a villain? *Thou* the best lance of the Templars! Craven knight! — forsworn priest! I spit at thee, and I defy thee. The God of Abraham's promise hath opened an escape to his daughter — even from this abyss of infamy!'

As she spoke, she threw open the latticed window which led to the bartizan, and in an instant after stood on the very verge of the parapet, with not the slightest screen between her and the tremendous depth below. Unprepared for such a desperate effort, for she had hitherto stood perfectly motionless, Bois-Guilbert had neither time to intercept nor to stop her. As he offered to advance, she exclaimed, 'Remain where thou art, proud Templar, or at thy choice advance! — one foot nearer, and I plunge myself from the precipice; my body shall be

crushed out of the very form of humanity upon the stones of that courtyard ere it become the victim of thy brutality !'

As she spoke this, she clasped her hands and extended them towards heaven, as if imploring mercy on her soul before she made the final plunge. The Templar hesitated, and a resolution which had never yielded to pity or distress gave way to his admiration of her fortitude. 'Come down,' he said, 'rash girl ! I swear by earth, and sea, and sky, I will offer thee no offence.'

'I will not trust thee, Templar,' said Rebecca ; 'thou hast taught me better how to estimate the virtues of thine order. The next preceptory would grant thee absolution for an oath the keeping of which concerned nought but the honour or the dishonour of a miserable Jewish maiden.'

'You do me injustice,' exclaimed the Templar, fervently ; 'I swear to you by the name which I bear — by the cross on my bosom — by the sword on my side — by the ancient crest of my fathers do I swear, I will do thee no injury whatsoever ! If not for thyself, yet for thy father's sake forbear ! I will be his friend, and in this castle he will need a powerful one.'

'Alas !' said Rebecca, 'I know it but too well. Dare I trust thee ?'

'May my arms be reversed and my name dishonoured,' said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, 'if thou shalt have reason to complain of me ! Many a law, many a commandment have I broken, but my word never.'

'I will then trust thee,' said Rebecca, 'thus far' ; and she descended from the verge of the battlement, but remained standing close by one of the embrasures, or *machicolles*, as they were then called. 'Here,' she said, 'I take my stand. Remain where thou art, and if thou shalt attempt to diminish by one step the distance now between us, thou shalt see that the Jewish maiden will rather trust her soul with God than her honour to the Templar !'

While Rebecca spoke thus, her high and firm resolve, which corresponded so well with the expressive beauty of her countenance, gave to her looks, air, and manner a dignity that seemed more than mortal. Her glance quailed not, her cheek blanched not, for the fear of a fate so instant and so horrible ; on the contrary, the thought that she had her fate at her command, and could escape at will from infamy to death, gave a yet deeper colour of carnation to her complexion, and a yet more brilliant fire to her eye. Bois-Guilbert, proud himself and



"REMAIN WHERE THOU ART, PROUD TEMPLAR, OR AT THY CHOICE
ADVANCE!"

high-spirited, thought he had never beheld beauty so animated and so commanding.

'Let there be peace between us, Rebecca,' he said.

'Peace, if thou wilt,' answered Rebecca — 'peace; but with this space between.'

'Thou needest no longer fear me,' said Bois-Guilbert.

'I fear thee not,' replied she, 'thanks to him that reared this dizzy tower so high that nought could fall from it and live. Thanks to him, and to the God of Israel! I fear thee not.'

'Thou dost me injustice,' said the Templar; 'by earth, sea, and sky, thou dost me injustice! I am not naturally that which you have seen me — hard, selfish, and relentless. It was woman that taught me cruelty, and on woman therefore I have exercised it; but not upon such as thou. Hear me, Rebecca. Never did knight take lance in his hand with a heart more devoted to the lady of his love than Brian de Bois-Guilbert. She, the daughter of a petty baron, who boasted for all his domains but a ruinous tower and an unproductive vineyard, and some few leagues of the barren Landes of Bourdeaux, her name was known wherever deeds of arms were done, known wider than that of many a lady's that had a county for a dowry. Yes,' he continued, pacing up and down the little platform, with an animation in which he seemed to lose all consciousness of Rebecca's presence — 'yes, my deeds, my danger, my blood made the name of Adelaide de Montemare known from the court of Castile to that of Byzantium. And how was I requited? When I returned with my dear-bought honours, purchased by toil and blood, I found her wedded to a Gascon squire, whose name was never heard beyond the limits of his own paltry domain! Truly did I love her, and bitterly did I revenge me of her broken faith! But my vengeance has recoiled on myself. Since that day I have separated myself from life and its ties. My manhood must know no domestic home, must be soothed by no affectionate wife. My age must know no kindly hearth. My grave must be solitary, and no offspring must outlive me, to bear the ancient name of Bois-Guilbert. At the feet of my superior I have laid down the right of self-action — the privilege of independence. The Templar, a serf in all but the name, can possess neither lands nor goods, and lives, moves, and breathes but at the will and pleasure of another.'

'Alas!' said Rebecca, 'what advantages could compensate for such an absolute sacrifice?'

'The power of vengeance, Rebecca,' replied the Templar, 'and the prospect of ambition.'

'An evil recompense,' said Rebecca, 'for the surrender of the rights which are dearest to humanity.'

'Say not so, maiden,' answered the Templar; 'revenge is a feast for the gods! And if they have reserved it, as priests tell us, to themselves, it is because they hold it an enjoyment too precious for the possession of mere mortals. And ambition it is a temptation which could disturb even the bliss of Heaven itself.' He paused a moment, and then added, 'Rebecca! she who could prefer death to dishonour must have a proud and a powerful soul. Mine thou must be! Nay, start not,' he added, 'it must be with thine own consent, and on thine own terms. Thou must consent to share with me hopes more extended than can be viewed from the throne of a monarch! Hear me ere you answer, and do not refuse. The Templar loses, as thou hast said, his personal rights, his power of free agency, but he becomes a member and a limb of a mighty body, before which thrones already tremble — even as the single drop of rain which mixes with the sea becomes an individual part of that resistless ocean which undermines rocks and engulfs royal armadas. Such a swelling flood is that powerful league. Of this mighty order I am no mean member, but already one of the chief commanders, and may well aspire one day to hold the baton of Grand Master. The poor soldiers of the Temple will not alone place their foot upon the necks of kings; a hemp-sandall'd monk can do that. Our mailed step shall ascend their throne, our gauntlet shall wrench the sceptre from their gripe. Not the reign of your vainly-expected Messiah offers such power to your dispersed tribes as my ambition may aim at. I have sought but a kindred spirit to share it, and I have found such in thee.'

'Sayest thou this to one of my people?' answered Rebecca. 'Bethink thee —'

'Answer me not,' said the Templar, 'by urging the difference of our creeds; within our secret conclaves we hold these nursery tales in derision. Think not we long remained blind to the idiotical folly of our founders, who forswore every delight of life for the pleasure of dying martyrs by hunger, by thirst, and by pestilence, and by the swords of savages, while they vainly strove to defend a barren desert, valuable only in the eyes of superstition. Our order soon adopted bolder and wider views, and found out a better indemnification for our

sacrifices. Our immense possessions in every kingdom of Europe, our high military fame, which brings within our circle the flower of chivalry from every Christian clime — these are dedicated to ends of which our pious founders little dreamed, and which are equally concealed from such weak spirits as embrace our order on the ancient principles, and whose superstition makes them our passive tools. But I will not further withdraw the veil of our mysteries. That bugle-sound announces something which may require my presence. Think on what I have said. Farewell! I do not say forgive me the violence I have threatened, for it was necessary to the display of thy character. Gold can be only known by the application of the touchstone. I will soon return, and hold further conference with thee.'

He re-entered the turret-chamber, and descended the stair, leaving Rebecca scarcely more terrified at the prospect of the death to which she had been so lately exposed, than at the furious ambition of the bold bad man in whose power she found herself so unhappily placed. When she entered the turret-chamber, her first duty was to return thanks to the God of Jacob for the protection which He had afforded her, and to implore its continuance for her and for her father. Another name glided into her petition; it was that of the wounded Christian, whom fate had placed in the hands of bloodthirsty men, his avowed enemies. Her heart indeed checked her, as if, even in communing with the Deity in prayer, she mingled in her devotions the recollection of one with whose fate hers could have no alliance — a Nazarene, and an enemy to her faith. But the petition was already breathed, nor could all the narrow prejudices of her sect induce Rebecca to wish it recalled.

CHAPTER XXV

A damn'd cramp piece of penmanship as ever I saw in my life!

She stoops to conquer.

WHEN the Templar reached the hall of the castle, he found De Bracy already there. 'Your love-suit,' said De Bracy, 'hath, I suppose, been disturbed, like mine, by this obstreperous summons. But you have come later and more reluctantly, and therefore I presume your interview has proved more agreeable than mine.'

'Has your suit, then, been unsuccessfully paid to the Saxon heiress?' said the Templar.

'By the bones of Thomas a Becket,' answered De Bracy, 'the Lady Rowena must have heard that I cannot endure the sight of women's tears.'

'Away!' said the Templar; 'thou a leader of a Free Company, and regard a woman's tears! A few drops sprinkled on the torch of love make the flame blaze the brighter.'

'Gramercy for the few drops of thy sprinkling,' replied De Bracy; 'but this damsel hath wept enough to extinguish a beacon-light. Never was such wringing of hands and such overflowing of eyes, since the days of St. Niobe, of whom Prior Aymer told us.' A water-fiend hath possessed the fair Saxon.

'A legend of fiends have occupied the bosom of the Jewess,' replied the Templar, 'for I think no single one, not even Apollyon himself, could have inspired such indomitable pride and resolution. But where is Front-de-Bœuf? That horn is sounded more and more clamorously.'

'He is negotiating with the Jew, I suppose,' replied De Bracy, coolly; 'probably the howls of Isaac have drowned the blast of the bugle. Thou mayest know, by experience, Sir

¹ I wish the Prior had also informed them when Niobe was sainted. Probably during that enlightened period when

Pan to Moses lent his pagan horn.

Brian, that a Jew parting with his treasures on such terms as our friend Front-de-Bœuf is like to offer will raise a clamour loud enough to be heard over twenty horns and trumpets to boot. But we will make the vassals call him.'

They were soon after joined by Front-de-Bœuf, who had been disturbed in his tyrannical cruelty in the manner with which the reader is acquainted, and had only tarried to give some necessary directions.

'Let us see the cause of this cursed clamour,' said Front-de-Bœuf; 'here is a letter, and, if I mistake not, it is in Saxon.'

He looked at it, turning it round and round as if he had had really some hopes of coming at the meaning by inverting the position of the paper, and then handed it to De Bracy.

'It may be magic spells for aught I know,' said De Bracy, who possessed his full proportion of the ignorance which characterised the chivalry of the period. 'Our chaplain attempted to teach me to write,' he said, 'but all my letters were formed like spear-heads and sword-blades, and so the old shaveling gave up the task.'

'Give it me,' said the Templar. 'We have that of the priestly character, that we have some knowledge to enlighten our valour.'

'Let us profit by your most reverend knowledge, then,' said De Bracy; 'what says the scroll?'

'It is a formal letter of defiance,' answered the Templar; 'but, by our Lady of Bethlehem, if it be not a foolish jest, it is the most extraordinary cartel that ever was sent across the drawbridge of a baronial castle.'

'Jest!' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'I would gladly know who dares jest with me in such a matter! Read it, Sir Brian.'

The Templar accordingly read it as follows:—

'I, Wamba, the son of Witless, jester to a noble and free-born man, Cedric of Rotherwood, called the Saxon: and I, Gurth, the son of Beowulph, the swineherd —'

'Thou art mad,' said Front-de-Bœuf, interrupting the reader.

'By St. Luke, it is so set down,' answered the Templar. Then resuming his task, he went on — 'I, Gurth, the son of Beowulph, swineherd unto the said Cedric, with the assistance of our allies and confederates, who make common cause with us in this our feud, namely, the good knight, called for the present *Le Noir Faineant*, and the stout yeoman, Robert Locksley, called Cleave-the-Wand, do you, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, and your allies and accomplices whomsoever, to wit, that

whereas you have, without cause given or feud declared, wrongfully and by mastery seized upon the person of our lord and master the said Cedric; also upon the person of a noble and freeborn damsel, the Lady Rowena of Hargottstandstede; also upon the person of a noble and freeborn man, Athelstane of Coningsburgh; also upon the persons of certain freeborn men, their *cnichts*; also upon certain serfs, their born bondsmen; also upon a certain Jew, named Isaac of York, together with his daughter, a Jewess, and certain horses and mules: which noble persons, with their *cnichts* and slaves, and also with the horses and mules, Jew and Jewess before said, were all in peace with his Majesty, and travelling as liege subjects upon the king's highway; therefore we require and demand that the said noble persons, namely, Cedric of Rotherwood, Rowena of Hargottstandstede, Athelstane of Coningsburgh, with their servants, *cnichts*, and followers, also the horses and mules, Jew and Jewess aforesaid, together with all goods and chattels to them pertaining, be, within an hour after the delivery hereof, delivered to us, or to those whom we shall appoint to receive the same, and that untouched and unharmed in body and goods. Failing of which, we do pronounce to you, that we hold ye as robbers and traitors, and will wager our bodies against ye in battle, siege, or otherwise, and do our utmost to your annoyance and destruction. Wherefore may God have you in His keeping. Signed by us upon the eve of St. Withold's day, under the great trysting oak in the Harthill Walk, the above being written by a holy man, clerk to God, our Lady, and St. Dunstan, in the chapel of Copmanhurst.

At the bottom of this document was scrawled, in the first place, a rude sketch of a cock's head and comb, with a legend expressing this hieroglyphic to be the sign-manual of Wamba, son of Witless. Under this respectable emblem stood a cross, stated to be the mark of Gurth, son of Beowulph. Then were written, in rough bold characters, the words *Le Noir Faïneant*. And, to conclude the whole, an arrow, neatly enough drawn, was described as the mark of the yeoman Locksley.

The knights heard this uncommon document read from end to end, and then gazed upon each other in silent amazement, as being utterly at a loss to know what it could portend. De Bracy was the first to break silence by an uncontrollable fit of laughter, wherein he was joined, though with more moderation, by the Templar. Front-de-Bœuf, on the contrary, seemed impatient of their ill-timed jocularity.

'I give you plain warning,' he said, 'fair sirs, that you had better consult how to bear yourselves under these circumstances, than give way to such misplaced merriment.'

'Front-de-Bœuf has not recovered his temper since his late overthrow,' said De Bracy to the Templar; 'he is cowed at the very idea of a cartel, though it come but from a fool and a swineherd.'

'By St. Michael,' answered Front-de-Bœuf, 'I would thou couldst stand the whole brunt of this adventure thyself, De Bracy. These fellows dared not have acted with such inconceivable impudence, had they not been supported by some strong bands. There are enough of outlaws in this forest to resent my protecting the deer. I did but tie one fellow, who was taken red-handed and in the fact, to the horns of a wild stag, which gored him to death in five minutes, and I had as many arrows shot at me as there were launched against yonder target at Ashby. Here, fellow,' he added, to one of his attendants, 'hast thou sent out to see by what force this precious challenge is to be supported?'

'There are at least two hundred men assembled in the woods,' answered a squire who was in attendance.

'Here is a proper matter!' said Front-de-Bœuf; 'this comes of lending you the use of my castle, that cannot manage your undertaking quietly, but you must bring this nest of hornets about my ears!'

'Of hornets!' said De Bracy, 'of stingless drones rather; a band of lazy knaves, who take to the wood and destroy the venison rather than labour for their maintenance.'

'Stingless!' replied Front-de-Bœuf; 'fork-headed shafts of a cloth-yard in length, and these shot within the breadth of a French crown, are sting enough.'

'For shame, Sir Knight!' said the Templar. 'Let us summon our people and sally forth upon them. One knight — ay, one man-at-arms, were enough for twenty such peasants.'

'Enough, and too much,' said De Bracy; 'I should only be ashamed to couch lance against them.'

'True,' answered Front-de-Bœuf; 'were they black Turks or Moors, Sir Templar, or the craven peasants of France, most valiant De Bracy; but these are English yeomen, over whom we shall have no advantage, save what we may derive from our arms and horses, which will avail us little in the glades of the forest. Sally, saidst thou? We have scarce men enough to defend the castle. The best of mine are at York; so is all

your band, De Bracy ; and we have scarcely twenty, besides the handful that were engaged in this mad business.'

'Thou dost not fear,' said the Templar, 'that they can assemble in force sufficient to attempt the castle?'

'Not so, Sir Brian,' answered Front-de-Bœuf. 'These outlaws have indeed a daring captain ; but without machines, scaling ladders, and experienced leaders, my castle may defy them.'

'Send to thy neighbours,' said the Templar ; 'let them assemble their people and come to the rescue of three knights, besieged by a jester and a swineherd in the baronial castle of Reginald Front-de-Bœuf!'

'You jest, Sir Knight,' answered the baron ; 'but to whom should I send ? Malvoisin is by this time at York with his retainers, and so are my other allies ; and so should I have been, but for this infernal enterprise.'

'Then send to York and recall our people,' said De Bracy.

'If they abide the shaking of my standard, or the sight of my Free Companions, I will give them credit for the boldest outlaws ever bent bow in greenwood.'

'And who shall bear such a message ?' said Front-de-Bœuf ; 'they will beset every path, and rip the errand out of his bosom. I have it,' he added, after pausing for a moment. 'Sir Templar, thou canst write as well as read, and if we can but find the writing materials of my chaplain, who died a twelvemonth since in the midst of his Christmas carousals —'

'So please ye,' said the squire, who was still in attendance, 'I think old Urfried has them somewhere in keeping, for love of the confessor. He was the last man, I have heard her tell, who ever said aught to her which man ought in courtesy to address to maid or matron.'

'Go, search them out, Engelred,' said Front-de-Bœuf ; 'and then, Sir Templar, thou shalt return an answer to this bold challenge.'

'I would rather do it at the sword's point than at that of the pen,' said Bois-Guilbert ; 'but be it as you will.'

He sat down accordingly, and indited, in the French language, an epistle of the following tenor : —

'Sir Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, with his noble and knightly allies and confederates, receive no defiances at the hands of slaves, bondsmen, or fugitives. If the person calling himself the Black Knight have indeed a claim to the honours of chivalry, he ought to know that he stands degraded by his present association, and has no right to ask reckoning at the hands of good

men of noble blood. Touching the prisoners we have made, we do in Christian charity require you to send a man of religion to receive their confession and reconcile them with God ; since it is our fixed intention to execute them this morning before noon, so that their heads, being placed on the battlements, shall show to all men how lightly we esteem those who have bestirred themselves in their rescue. Wherefore, as above, we require you to send a priest to reconcile them to God, in doing which you shall render them the last earthly service.

This letter, being folded, was delivered to the squire, and by him to the messenger who waited without, as the answer to that which he had brought.

The yeoman, having thus accomplished his mission, returned to the headquarters of the allies, which were for the present established under a venerable oak-tree, about three arrow-flights distant from the castle. Here Wamba and Gurth, with their allies the Black Knight and Locksley, and the jovial hermit, awaited with impatience an answer to their summons. Around, and at a distance from them, were seen many a bold yeoman, whose silvan dress and weather-beaten countenances showed the ordinary nature of their occupation. More than two hundred had already assembled, and others were fast coming in. Those whom they obeyed as leaders were only distinguished from the others by a feather in the cap, their dress, arms, and equipments being in all other respects the same.

Besides these bands, a less orderly and a worse-armed force, consisting of the Saxon inhabitants of the neighbouring township, as well as many bondsmen and servants from Cedric's extensive estate, had already arrived, for the purpose of assisting in his rescue. Few of these were armed otherwise than with such rustic weapons as necessity sometimes converts to military purposes. Boar-spears, scythes, flails, and the like, were their chief arms ; for the Normans, with the usual policy of conquerors, were jealous of permitting to the vanquished Saxons the possession or the use of swords and spears. These circumstances rendered the assistance of the Saxons far from being so formidable to the besieged as the strength of the men themselves, their superior numbers, and the animation inspired by a just cause, might otherwise well have made them. It was to the leaders of this motley army that the letter of the Templar was now delivered.

Reference was at first made to the chaplain for an exposition of its contents.

'By the crook of St. Dunstan,' said that worthy ecclesiastic, 'which hath brought more sheep within the sheepfold than the crook of e'er another saint in Paradise, I swear that I cannot expound unto you this jargon, which, whether it be French or Arabic, is beyond my guess.'

He then gave the letter to Gurth, who shook his head gruffly, and passed it to Wamba. The Jester looked at each of the four corners of the paper with such a grin of affected intelligence as a monkey is apt to assume upon similar occasions, then cut a caper, and gave the letter to Locksley.

'If the long letters were bows, and the short letters broad arrows, I might know something of the matter,' said the honest yeoman; 'but as the matter stands, the meaning is as safe, for me, as the stag that's at twelve miles' distance.'

'I must be clerk, then,' said the Black Knight; and taking the letter from Locksley, he first read it over to himself, and then explained the meaning in Saxon to his confederates.

'Execute the noble Cedric!' exclaimed Wamba; 'by the rod, thou must be mistaken, Sir Knight.'

'Not I, my worthy friend,' replied the knight, 'I have explained the words as they are here set down.'

'Then, by St. Thomas of Canterbury,' replied Gurth, 'we will have the castle, should we tear it down with our hands!'

'We have nothing else to tear it with,' replied Wamba; 'but mine are scarce fit to make mammoicks of freestone and mortar.'

'Tis but a contrivance to gain time,' said Locksley; 'they dare not do a deed for which I could exact a fearful penalty.'

'I would,' said the Black Knight, 'there were some one among us who could obtain admission into the castle, and discover how the case stands with the besieged. Methinks, as they require a confessor to be sent, this holy hermit might at once exercise his pious vocation and procure us the information we desire.'

'A plague on thee and thy advice!' said the good hermit; 'I tell thee, Sir Slothful Knight, that when I doff my friar's frock, my priesthood, my sanctity, my very Latin, are put off along with it; and when in my green jerkin I can better kill twenty deer than confess one Christian.'

'I fear,' said the Black Knight—'I fear greatly there is no one here that is qualified to take upon him, for the nonce, this same character of father confessor?'

All looked on each other, and were silent.

'I see,' said Wamba, after a short pause, 'that the fool must still be the fool, and put his neck in the venture which wise men shrink from. You must know, my dear cousins and countrymen, that I wore russet before I wore motley, and was bred to be a friar, until a brain-fever came upon me and left me just wit enough to be a fool. I trust, with the assistance of the good hermit's frock, together with the priesthood, sanctity, and learning which are stitched into the cowl of it, I shall be found qualified to administer both worldly and ghostly comfort to our worthy master Cedric and his companions in adversity.'

'Hath he sense enough, thinkst thou?' said the Black Knight, addressing Gurth.

'I know not,' said Gurth; 'but if he hath not, it will be the first time he hath wanted wit to turn his folly to account.'

'On with the frock, then, good fellow,' quoth the Knight, 'and let thy master send us an account of their situation within the castle. Their numbers must be few, and it is five to one they may be accessible by a sudden and bold attack. Time wears — away with thee.'

'And, in the meantime,' said Locksley, 'we will beset the place so closely that not so much as a fly shall carry news from thence. So that, my good friend,' he continued, addressing Wamba, 'thou mayest assure these tyrants that whatever violence they exercise on the persons of their prisoners shall be most severely repaid upon their own.'

'*Pax vobiscum*,' said Wamba, who was now muffled in his religious disguise.

And so saying, he imitated the solemn and stately deportment of a friar, and departed to execute his mission.

CHAPTER XXVI

The hottest horse will oft be cool,
The dullest will show fire ;
The friar will often play the fool,
The fool will play the friar.

Old Song.

WHEN the Jester, arrayed in the cowl and frock of the hermit, and having his knotted cord twisted round his middle, stood before the portal of the castle of Front-de-Bœuf, the warder demanded of him his name and errand.

'*Pax vobiscum,*' answered the Jester, 'I am a poor brother of the Order of St. Francis, who come hither to do my office to certain unhappy prisoners now secured within this castle.'

'Thou art a bold friar,' said the warder, 'to come hither, where, saving our own drunken confessor, a cock of thy feather hath not crowed these twenty years.'

'Yet I pray thee, do mine errand to the lord of the castle,' answered the pretended friar; 'trust me, it will find good acceptance with him, and the cock shall crow, that the whole castle shall hear him.'

'Gramercy,' said the warder; 'but if I come to shame for leaving my post upon thine errand, I will try whether a friar's grey gown be proof against a grey-goose shaft.'

With this threat he left his turret, and carried to the hall of the castle his unwonted intelligence, that a holy friar stood before the gate and demanded instant admission. With no small wonder he received his master's commands to admit the holy man immediately; and, having previously manned the entrance to guard against surprise, he obeyed, without further scruple, the commands which he had received. The hare-brained self-conceit which had emboldened Wamba to undertake this dangerous office was scarce sufficient to support him when he found himself in the presence of a man so dreadful, and so much dreaded, as Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, and he brought out his '*Pax vobiscum,*'

to which he, in a good measure, trusted for supporting his character, with more anxiety and hesitation than had hitherto accompanied it. But Front-de-Bœuf was accustomed to see men of all ranks tremble in his presence, so that the timidity of the supposed father did not give him any cause of suspicion. 'Who and whence art thou, priest?' said he.

'*Pax vobiscum*,' reiterated the Jester, 'I am a poor servant of St. Francis, who, travelling through this wilderness, have fallen among thieves as Scripture hath it — *quidam viator incidit in latrones* — which thieves have sent me unto this castle in order to do my ghostly office on two persons condemned by your honourable justice.'

'Ay, right,' answered Front-de-Bœuf; 'and canst thou tell me, holy father, the number of those banditti?'

'Gallant sir,' answered the Jester, '*nomen illis legio* — their name is legion.'

'Tell me in plain terms what numbers there are, or, priest, thy cloak and cord will ill protect thee.'

'Alas!' said the supposed friar, '*cor meum eructavit*, that is to say, I was like to burst with fear! but I conceive they may be, what of yeomen, what of commons, at least five hundred men.'

'What!' said the Templar, who came into the hall that moment, 'muster the wasps so thick here? It is time to stifle such a mischievous brood.' Then taking Front-de-Bœuf aside, 'Knowest thou the priest?'

'He is a stranger from a distant convent,' said Front-de-Bœuf; 'I know him not.'

'Then trust him not with thy purpose in words,' answered the Templar. 'Let him carry a written order to De Bracy's company of Free Companions, to repair instantly to their master's aid. In the meantime, and that the shaveling may suspect nothing, permit him to go freely about his task of preparing these Saxon hogs for the slaughter-house.'

'It shall be so,' said Front-de-Bœuf. And he forthwith appointed a domestic to conduct Wamba to the apartment where Cedric and Athelstane were confined.

The impatience of Cedric had been rather enhanced than diminished by his confinement. He walked from one end of the hall to the other, with the attitude of one who advances to charge an enemy, or to storm the breach of a beleaguered place, sometimes ejaculating to himself, sometimes addressing Athelstane, who stoutly and stoically awaited the issue of the

adventure, digesting, in the meantime, with great composure, the liberal meal which he had made at noon, and not greatly interesting himself about the duration of his captivity, which he concluded would, like all earthly evils, find an end in Heaven's good time.

'*Pax vobiscum,*' said the Jester, entering the apartment; 'the blessing of St. Dunstan, St. Denis, St. Duthoc, and all other saints whatsoever, be upon ye and about ye.'

'Enter freely,' answered Cedric to the supposed friar; 'with what intent art thou come hither?'

'To bid you prepare yourselves for death,' answered the Jester.

'It is impossible!' replied Cedric, starting. 'Fearless and wicked as they are, they dare not attempt such open and gratuitous cruelty!'

'Alas!' said the Jester, 'to restrain them by their sense of humanity is the same as to stop a runaway horse with a bridle of silk thread. Bethink thee, therefore, noble Cedric, and you also, gallant Athelstane, what crimes you have committed in the flesh; for this very day will ye be called to answer at a higher tribunal.'

'Hearest thou this, Athelstane?' said Cedric. 'We must rouse up our hearts to this last action, since better it is we should die like men than live like slaves.'

'I am ready,' answered Athelstane, 'to stand the worst of their malice, and shall walk to my death with as much composure as ever I did to my dinner.'

'Let us then unto our holy gear, father,' said Cedric.

'Wait yet a moment, good uncle,' said the Jester, in his natural tone; 'better look long before you leap in the dark.'

'By my faith,' said Cedric, 'I should know that voice!'

'It is that of your trusty slave and jester,' answered Wamba, throwing back his cowl. 'Had you taken a fool's advice formerly, you would not have been here at all. Take a fool's advice now, and you will not be here long.'

'How meanest thou, knave?' answered the Saxon.

'Even thus,' replied Wamba; 'take thou this frock and cord, which are all the orders I ever had, and march quietly out of the castle, leaving me your cloak and girdle to take the long leap in thy stead.'

'Leave thee in my stead!' said Cedric, astonished at the proposal; 'why, they would hang thee, my poor knave.'

'E'en let them do as they are permitted,' said Wamba; 'I

trust — no disparagement to your birth — that the son of Witless may hang in a chain with as much gravity as the chain hung upon his ancestor the alderman.

'Well, Wamba,' answered Cedric, 'for one thing will I grant thy request. And that is, if thou wilt make the exchange of garments with Lord Athelstane instead of me.'

'No, by St. Dunstan,' answered Wamba; 'there were little reason in that. Good right there is that the son of Witless should suffer to save the son of Hereward; but little wisdom there were in his dying for the benefit of one whose fathers were strangers to his.'

'Villain,' said Cedric, 'the fathers of Athelstane were monarchs of England!'

'They might be whomsoever they pleased,' replied Wamba; 'but my neck stands too straight upon my shoulders to have it twisted for their sake. Wherefore, good my master, either take my proffer yourself or suffer me to leave this dungeon as free as I entered.'

'Let the old tree wither,' continued Cedric, 'so the stately hope of the forest be preserved. Save the noble Athelstane, my trusty Wamba! it is the duty of each who has Saxon blood in his veins. Thou and I will abide together the utmost rage of our injurious oppressors, while he, free and safe, shall arouse the awakened spirits of our countrymen to avenge us.'

'Not so, father Cedric,' said Athelstane, grasping his hand, for, when roused to think or act, his deeds and sentiments were not unbecoming his high race — 'not so,' he continued; 'I would rather remain in this hall a week without food save the prisoner's stinted loaf, or drink save the prisoner's measure of water, than embrace the opportunity to escape which the slave's untaught kindness has purveyed for his master.'

'You are called wise men, sirs,' said the Jester, 'and I a crazed fool; but, uncle Cedric and cousin Athelstane, the fool shall decide this controversy for ye, and save ye the trouble of straining courtesies any farther. I am like John-a-Duck's mare, that will let no man mount her but John-a-Duck. I came to save my master, and if he will not consent, basta! I can but go away home again. Kind service cannot be chucked from hand to hand like a shuttlecock or stool-ball. I'll hang for no man but my own born master.'

'Go, then, noble Cedric,' said Athelstane, 'neglect not this opportunity. Your presence without may encourage friends to our rescue; your remaining here would ruin us all.'

'And is there any prospect, then, of rescue from without?' said Cedric, looking at the Jester.

'Prospect, indeed!' echoed Wamba; 'let me tell you, when you fill my cloak, you are wrapped in a general's cassock. Five hundred men are there without, and I was this morning one of their chief leaders. My fool's cap was a casque, and my bauble a truncheon. Well, we shall see what good they will make by exchanging a fool for a wise man. Truly, I fear they will lose in valour what they may gain in discretion. And so farewell, master, and be kind to poor Gurth and his dog Fangs; and let my cockscorn hang in the hall at Rotherwood, in memory that I flung away my life for my master, like a faithful — fool.' The last word came out with a sort of double expression, betwixt jest and earnest.

The tears stood in Cedric's eyes. 'Thy memory shall be preserved,' he said, 'while fidelity and affection have honour upon earth! But that I trust I shall find the means of saving Rowena, and thee, Athelstane, and thee also, my poor Wamba, thou shouldst not overbear me in this matter.'

The exchange of dress was now accomplished, when a sudden doubt struck Cedric.

'I know no language,' he said, 'but my own, and a few words of their mincing Norman. How shall I bear myself like a reverend brother?'

'The spell lies in two words,' replied Wamba. '*Pax vobiscum* will answer all queries. If you go or come, eat or drink, bless or ban, *Pax vobiscum* carries you through it all. It is as useful to a friar as a broomstick to a witch, or a wand to a conjurer. Speak it but thus, in a deep grave tone — *Pax vobiscum* — it is irresistible. Watch and ward, knight and squire, foot and horse, it acts as a charm upon them all. I think, if they bring me out to be hanged to-morrow, as is much to be doubted they may, I will try its weight upon the finisher of the sentence.'

'If such prove the case,' said his master, 'my religious orders are soon taken — *Pax vobiscum*. I trust I shall remember the password. Noble Athelstane, farewell; and farewell, my poor boy, whose heart might make amends for a weaker head; I will save you, or return and die with you. The royal blood of our Saxon kings shall not be spilt while mine beats in my veins; nor shall one hair fall from the head of the kind knave who risked himself for his master, if Cedric's peril can prevent it. Farewell.'

'Farewell, noble Cedric,' said Athelstane; 'remember, it is

the true part of a friar to accept refreshment, if you are offered any.'

'Farewell, uncle,' added Wamba; 'and remember *Pax vobiscum*.'

Thus exhorted, Cedric sallied forth upon his expedition; and it was not long ere he had occasion to try the force of that spell which his Jester had recommended as omnipotent. In a low-sloped and dusky passage, by which he endeavoured to work his way to the hall of the castle, he was interrupted by a female form.

'*Pax vobiscum!*' said the pseudo friar, and was endeavouring to hurry past, when a soft voice replied, '*Et vobis; quæso, domine reverentissime, pro misericordia vestra.*'

'I am somewhat deaf,' replied Cedric, in good Saxon, and at the same time muttered to himself, 'A curse on the fool and his *Pax vobiscum!* I have lost my javelin at the first cast.'

It was, however, no unusual thing for a priest of those days to be deaf of his Latin ear, and this the person who now addressed Cedric knew full well.

'I pray you of dear love, reverend father,' she replied in his own language, 'that you will deign to visit with your ghostly comfort a wounded prisoner of this castle, and have such compassion upon him and us as thy holy office teaches. Never shall good deed so highly advantage thy convent.'

'Daughter,' answered Cedric, much embarrassed, 'my time in this castle will not permit me to exercise the duties of mine office. I must presently forth: there is life and death upon my speed.'

'Yet, father, let me entreat you by the vow you have taken on you,' replied the suppliant, 'not to leave the oppressed and endangered without counsel or succour.'

'May the fiend fly away with me, and leave me in Ifrin with the souls of Odin and of Thor!' answered Cedric, impatiently, and would probably have proceeded in the same tone of total departure from his spiritual character, when the colloquy was interrupted by the harsh voice of Urfried, the old crone of the turret.

'How, minion,' said she to the female speaker, 'is this the manner in which you requite the kindness which permitted thee to leave thy prison-cell yonder? Puttest thou the reverend man to use ungracious language to free himself from the importunities of a Jewess?'

'A Jewess!' said Cedric, availing himself of the information to get clear of their interruption. 'Let me pass, woman! stop me not at your peril. I am fresh from my holy office, and would avoid pollution.'

'Come this way, father,' said the old hag, 'thou art a stranger in this castle, and canst not leave it without a guide. Come hither, for I would speak with thee. And you, daughter of an accursed race, go to the sick man's chamber, and tend him until my return; and woe betide you if you again quit it without my permission!'

Rebecca retreated. Her importunities had prevailed upon Urfried to suffer her to quit the turret, and Urfried had employed her services where she herself would most gladly have paid them, by the bedside of the wounded Ivanhoe. With an understanding awake to their dangerous situation, and prompt to avail herself of each means of safety which occurred, Rebecca had hoped something from the presence of a man of religion, who, she learned from Urfried, had penetrated into this godless castle. She watched the return of the supposed ecclesiastic, with the purpose of addressing him, and interesting him in favour of the prisoners; with what imperfect success the reader has been just acquainted.

CHAPTER XXVII

Fond wretch ! and what canst thou relate,
But deeds of sorrow, shame, and sin ?
Thy deeds are proved — thou know'st thy fate ;
But come, thy tale ! begin — begin.

But I have griefs of other kind,
Troubles and sorrows more severe ;
Give me to ease my tortured mind,
Lend to my woes a patient ear ;
And let me, if I may not find
A friend to help, find one to hear.

CRABBE'S Hall of Justice.

WHEN Urfried had with clamours and menaces driven Rebecca back to the apartment from which she had sallied, she proceeded to conduct the unwilling Cedric into a small apartment, the door of which she heedfully secured. Then fetching from a cupboard a stoup of wine and two flagons, she placed them on the table, and said in a tone rather asserting a fact than asking a question, 'Thou art Saxon, father. Deny it not,' she continued, observing that Cedric hastened not to reply ; 'the sounds of my native language are sweet to mine ears, though seldom heard save from the tongues of the wretched and degraded serfs on whom the proud Normans impose the meanest drudgery of this dwelling. Thou art a Saxon, father — a Saxon, and, save as thou art a servant of God, a freeman. Thine accents are sweet in mine ear.'

'Do not Saxon priests visit this castle, then ?' replied Cedric ; 'it were, methinks, their duty to comfort the outcast and oppressed children of the soil.'

'They come not ; or if they come, they better love to revel at the board of their conquerors,' answered Urfried, 'than to hear the groans of their countrymen ; so, at least, report speaks of them, of myself I can say little. This castle, for ten years, has opened to no priest save the debauched Norman chaplain.'

who partook the nightly revels of Front-de-Bœuf, and he has been long gone to render an account of his stewardship. But thou art a Saxon — a Saxon priest, and I have one question to ask of thee.

'I am a Saxon,' answered Cedric, 'but unworthy, surely, of the name of priest. Let me begone on my way. I swear I will return, or send one of our fathers more worthy to hear your confession.'

'Stay yet a while,' said Urfried; 'the accents of the voice which thou hearest now will soon be choked with the cold earth, and I would not descend to it like the beast I have lived. But wine must give me strength to tell the horrors of my tale.' She poured out a cup, and drank it with a frightful avidity, which seemed desirous of draining the last drop in the goblet. 'It stupifies,' she said, looking upwards as she finished her draught, 'but it cannot cheer. Partake it, father, if you would hear my tale without sinking down upon the pavement.' Cedric would have avoided pledging her in this ominous conviviality, but the sign which she made to him expressed impatience and despair. He complied with her request, and answered her challenge in a large wine-cup; she then proceeded with her story, as if appeased by his complaisance.

'I was not born,' she said, 'father, the wretch that thou now seest me. I was free, was happy, was honoured, loved, and was beloved. I am now a slave, miserable and degraded, the sport of my masters' passions while I had yet beauty, the object of their contempt, scorn, and hatred, since it has passed away. Dost thou wonder, father, that I should hate mankind, and, above all, the race that has wrought this change in me? Can the wrinkled decrepit hag before thee, whose wrath must vent itself in impotent curses, forget she was once the daughter of the noblethane of Torquilstone, before whose frown a thousand vassals trembled?'

'Thou the daughter of Torquil Wolfganger!' said Cedric, receding as he spoke; 'thou — thou — the daughter of that noble Saxon, my father's friend and companion in arms!'

'Thy father's friend!' echoed Urfried; 'then Cedric called the Saxon stands before me, for the noble Hereward of Rotherwood had but one son, whose name is well known among his countrymen. But if thou art Cedric of Rotherwood, why this religious dress? hast thou too despaired of saving thy country, and sought refuge from oppression in the shade of the convent?'

'It matters not who I am,' said Cedric; 'proceed, unhappy

woman, with thy tale of horror and guilt! Guilt there must be; there is guilt even in thy living to tell it.'

'There is — there is,' answered the wretched woman, 'deep, black, damning guilt — guilt that lies like a load at my breast — guilt that all the penitential fires of hereafter cannot cleanse. Yes, in these halls, stained with the noble and pure blood of my father and my brethren — in these very halls, to have lived the paramour of their murderer, the slave at once and the partaker of his pleasures, was to render every breath which I drew of vital air a crime and a curse.'

'Wretched woman!' exclaimed Cedric. 'And while the friends of thy father — while each true Saxon heart, as it breathed a requiem for his soul, and those of his valiant sons, forgot not in their prayers the murdered Ulrica — while all mourned and honoured the dead, thou hast lived to merit our hate and execration — lived to unite thyself with the vile tyrant who murdered thy nearest and dearest, who shed the blood of infancy rather than a male of the noble house of Torquil Wolfgang should survive — with him hast thou lived to unite thyself, and in the bands of lawless love!'

'In lawless bands, indeed, but not in those of love!' answered the hag; 'love will sooner visit the regions of eternal doom than those unhallowed vaults. No; with that at least I cannot reproach myself: hatred to Front-de-Bœuf and his race governed my soul most deeply, even in the hour of his guilty endearments.'

'You hated him, and yet you lived,' replied Cedric; 'wretch! was there no poniard — no knife — no bodkin! Well was it for thee, since thou didst prize such an existence, that the secrets of a Norman castle are like those of the grave. For had I but dreamed of the daughter of Torquil living in foul communion with the murderer of her father, the sword of a true Saxon had found thee out even in the arms of thy paramour!'

'Wouldst thou indeed have done this justice to the name of Torquil?' said Ulrica, for we may now lay aside her assumed name of Urfried; 'thou art then the true Saxon report speaks thee! for even within these accursed walls, where, as thou well sayest, guilt shrouds itself in inscrutable mystery — even there has the name of Cedric been sounded; and I, wretched and degraded, have rejoiced to think that there yet breathed an avenger of our unhappy nation. I also have had my hours of vengeance. I have fomented the quarrels of our foes, heated drunken revelry into murderous broil. I have seen their blood

flow—I have heard their dying groans! Look on me, Cedric; are there not still left on this foul and faded face some traces of the features of Torquil?

‘Ask me not of them, Ulrica,’ replied Cedric, in a tone of grief mixed with abhorrence; ‘these traces form such a resemblance as arises from the grave of the dead when a fiend has animated the lifeless corpse.’

‘Be it so,’ answered Ulrica, ‘yet were these fiendish features the mask of a spirit of light when they were able to set at variance the elder Front-de-Bœuf and his son Reginald! The darkness of hell should hide what followed; but revenge must lift the veil, and darkly intimate what it would raise the dead to speak aloud. Long had the smouldering fire of discord glowed between the tyrant father and his savage son; long had I nursed, in secret, the unnatural hatred; it blazed forth in an hour of drunken wassail, and at his own board fell my oppressor by the hand of his own son: such are the secrets these vaults conceal! Rend asunder, ye accursed arches,’ she added, looking up towards the roof, ‘and bury in your fall all who are conscious of the hideous mystery!’

‘And thou, creature of guilt and misery,’ said Cedric, ‘what became thy lot on the death of thy ravisher?’

‘Guess it, but ask it not. Here—here I dwelt, till age, premature age, has stamped its ghastly features on my countenance—scorned and insulted where I was once obeyed, and compelled to bound the revenge which had once such ample scope to the efforts of petty malice of a discontented menial, or the vain or unheeded curses of an impotent hag; condemned to hear from my lonely turret the sounds of revelry in which I once partook, or the shrieks and groans of new victims of oppression.’

‘Ulrica,’ said Cedric, ‘with a heart which still, I fear, regrets the lost reward of thy crimes, as much as the deeds by which thou didst acquire that meed, how didst thou dare to address thee to one who wears this robe? Consider, unhappy woman, what could the sainted Edward himself do for thee, were he here in bodily presence? The royal Confessor was endowed by Heaven with power to cleanse the ulcers of the body; but only God Himself can cure the leprosy of the soul.’

‘Yet, turn not from me, stern prophet of wrath,’ she exclaimed, ‘but tell me, if thou canst, in what shall terminate these new and awful feelings that burst on my solitude. Why do deeds, long since done, rise before me in new and irresistible

horrors ! What fate is prepared beyond the grave for her to whom God has assigned on earth a lot of such unspeakable wretchedness ? Better had I turn to Woden, Hertha, and Zernebock, to Mista, and to Skogula, the gods of our yet unbaptised ancestors, than endure the dreadful anticipations which have of late haunted my waking and my sleeping hours !

'I am no priest,' said Cedric, turning with disgust from this miserable picture of guilt, wretchedness, and despair — 'I am no priest, though I wear a priest's garment.'

'Priest or layman,' answered Ulrica, 'thou art the first I have seen for twenty years by whom God was feared or man regarded ; and dost thou bid me despair ?'

'I bid thee repent,' said Cedric. 'Seek to prayer and penance, and mayest thou find acceptance ! But I cannot, I will not, longer abide with thee.'

'Stay yet a moment !' said Ulrica ; 'leave me not now, son of my father's friend, lest the demon who has governed my life should tempt me to avenge myself of thy hard-hearted scorn. Thinkest thou, if Front-de-Bœuf found Cedric the Saxon in his castle, in such a disguise, that thy life would be a long one ? Already his eye has been upon thee like a falcon on his prey.'

'And be it so,' said Cedric ; 'and let him tear me with beak and talons, ere my tongue say one word which my heart doth not warrant. I will die a Saxon — true in word, open in deed. I bid thee avaunt ! touch me not, stay me not ! The sight of Front-de-Bœuf himself is less odious to me than thou, degraded and degenerate as thou art.'

'Be it so,' said Ulrica, no longer interrupting him ; 'go thy way, and forget, in the insolence of thy superiority, that the wretch before thee is the daughter of thy father's friend. Go thy way ; if I am separated from mankind by my sufferings — separated from those whose aid I might most justly expect — not less will I be separated from them in my revenge ! No man shall aid me, but the ears of all men shall tingle to hear of the deed which I shall dare to do ! Farewell ! thy scorn has burst the last tie which seemed yet to unite me to my kind — a thought that my woes might claim the compassion of my people.'

'Ulrica,' said Cedric, softened by this appeal, 'hast thou borne up and endured to live through so much guilt and so much misery, and wilt thou now yield to despair when thine

eyes are opened to thy crimes, and when repentance were thy fitter occupation !'

'Cedric,' answered Ulrica, 'thou little knowest the human heart. To act as I have acted, to think as I have thought, requires the maddening love of pleasure, mingled with the keen appetite of revenge, the proud consciousness of power — draughts too intoxicating for the human heart to bear, and yet retain the power to prevent. Their force has long passed away. Age has no pleasures, wrinkles have no influence, revenge itself dies away in impotent curses. Then comes remorse, with all its vipers, mixed with vain regrets for the past and despair for the future ! Then, when all other strong impulses have ceased, we become like the fiends in hell, who may feel remorse, but never repentance. But thy words have awakened a new soul within me. Well hast thou said, all is possible for those who dare to die ! Thou hast shown me the means of revenge, and be assured I will embrace them. It has hitherto shared this wasted bosom with other and with rival passions ; henceforward it shall possess me wholly, and thou thyself shalt say that, whatever was the life of Ulrica, her death well became the daughter of the noble Torquil. There is a force without beleaguering this accursed castle ; hasten to lead them to the attack, and when thou shalt see a red flag wave from the turret on the eastern angle of the donjon, press the Normans hard : they will then have enough to do within, and you may win the wall in spite both of bow and mangonel. Begone, I pray thee ; follow thine own fate, and leave me to mine.'

Cedric would have inquired farther into the purpose which she thus darkly announced, but the stern voice of Front-de-Bœuf was heard exclaiming, 'Where tarries this loitering priest ! By the scollop-shell of Compostella, I will make a martyr of him, if he loiters here to hatch treason among my domestics !'

'What a true prophet,' said Ulrica, 'is an evil conscience ! But heed him not ; out and to thy people. Cry your Saxon onslaught ; and let them sing their war-song of Rollo, if they will, vengeance shall bear a burden to it.'

As she thus spoke, she vanished through a private door, and Reginald Front-de-Bœuf entered the apartment. Cedric, with some difficulty, compelled himself to make obeisance to the haughty Baron, who returned his courtesy with a slight inclination of the head.

'Thy penitents, father, have made a long shrift ; it is the

better for them, since it is the last they shall ever make. Hast thou prepared them for death ?

'I found them,' said Cedric, in such French as he could command, 'expecting the worst, from the moment they knew into whose power they had fallen.'

'How now, Sir Friar,' replied Front-de-Bœuf, 'thy speech, methinks, smacks of a Saxon tongue ?'

'I was bred in the convent of St. Withold of Burton,' answered Cedric.

'Ay !' said the Baron ; 'it had been better for thee to have been a Norman, and better for my purpose too ; but need has no choice of messengers. That St. Withold's of Burton is a howlet's nest worth the harrying. The day will soon come that the frock shall protect the Saxon as little as the mail-coat.'

'God's will be done,' said Cedric, in a voice tremulous with passion, which Front-de-Bœuf imputed to fear.

'I see,' said he, 'thou dreamest already that our men-at-arms are in thy refectory and thy ale-vaults. But do me one cast of thy holy office, and, come what list of others, thou shalt sleep as safe in thy cell as a snail within his shell of proof.'

'Speak your commands,' said Cedric, with suppressed emotion.

'Follow me through this passage, then, that I may dismiss thee by the postern.'

And as he strode on his way before the supposed friar, Front-de-Bœuf thus schooled him in the part which he desired he should act.

'Thou seest, Sir Friar, yon herd of Saxon swine, who have dared to environ this castle of Torquilstone. Tell them whatever thou hast a mind of the weakness of this fortalice, or aught else that can detain them before it for twenty-four hours. Meantime bear thou this scroll. But soft — canst read, Sir Priest ?'

'Not a jot I,' answered Cedric, 'save on my breviary ; and then I know the characters, because I have the holy service by heart, praised be Our Lady and St. Withold !'

'The fitter messenger for my purpose. Carry thou this scroll to the castle of Philip de Malvoisin ; say it cometh from me, and is written by the Templar Brian de Bois-Guilbert, and that I pray him to send it to York with all the speed man and horse can make. Meanwhile, tell him to doubt nothing, he

shall find us whole and sound behind our battlement. Shame on it, that we should be compelled to hide thus by a pack of runagates, who are wont to fly even at the flash of our pennons and the tramp of our horses! I say to thee, priest, contrive some cast of thine art to keep the knaves where they are, until our friends bring up their lances. My vengeance is awake, and she is a falcon that slumbers not till she has been gorged.'

'By my patron saint,' said Cedric, with deeper energy than became his character, 'and by every saint who has lived and died in England, your commands shall be obeyed! Not a Saxon shall stir from before these walls, if I have art and influence to detain them there.'

'Ha!' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'thou changest thy tone, Sir Priest, and speakest brief and bold, as if thy heart were in the slaughter of the Saxon herd; and yet thou art thyself of kindred to the swine!'

Cedric was no ready practiser of the art of dissimulation, and would at this moment have been much the better of a hint from Wamba's more fertile brain. But necessity, according to the ancient proverb, sharpens invention, and he muttered something under his cowl concerning the men in question being excommunicated outlaws both to church and to kingdom.

'*Despardieux*,' answered Front-de-Bœuf, 'thou hast spoken the very truth: I forgot that the knaves can strip a fat abbot as well as if they had been born south of yonder salt channel. Was it not he of St. Ives whom they tied to an oak-tree, and compelled to sing a mass while they were rifling his mails and his wallets? No, by Our Lady, that jest was played by Gualtier of Middleton, one of our own companions-at-arms. But they were Saxons who robbed the chapel at St. Bees of cup, candlestick, and chalice, were they not?'

'They were godless men,' answered Cedric.

'Ay, and they drank out all the good wine and ale that lay in store for many a secret carousal, when ye pretend ye are but busied with vigils and primes! Priest, thou art bound to revenge such sacrilege.'

'I am indeed bound to vengeance,' murmured Cedric; 'St. Withold knows my heart.'

Front-de-Bœuf, in the meanwhile, led the way to a postern, where, passing the moat on a single plank, they reached a small barbican, or exterior defence, which communicated with the open field by a well-fortified sallyport.

'Begone, then; and if thou wilt do mine errand, and if

thou return hither when it is done, thou shalt see Saxon flesh cheap as ever was hog's in the shambles of Sheffield. And, hark thee, thou seemest to be a jolly confessor; come hither after the onslaught, and thou shalt have as much Malvoisie as would drench thy whole convent.'

'Assuredly we shall meet again,' answered Cedric.

'Something in hand the whilst,' continued the Norman; and, as they parted at the postern door, he thrust into Cedric's reluctant hand a gold byzant, adding, 'Remember, I will flay off both cowl and skin if thou failest in thy purpose.'

'And full leave will I give thee to do both,' answered Cedric, leaving the postern, and striding forth over the free field with a joyful step, 'if, when we meet next, I deserve not better at thine hand.' Turning then back towards the castle, he threw the piece of gold towards the donor, exclaiming at the same time, 'False Norman, thy money perish with thee!'

Front-de-Bœuf heard the words imperfectly, but the action was suspicious. 'Archers,' he called to the warders on the outward battlements, 'send me an arrow through yon monk's frock! Yet stay,' he said, as his retainers were bending their bows, 'it avails not; we must thus far trust him since we have no better shift. I think he dares not betray me; at the worst I can but treat with these Saxon dogs whom I have safe in kennel. Ho! Giles jailor, let them bring Cedric of Rotherwood before me, and the other churl, his companion — him I mean of Coningsburgh — Athelstane there, or what call they him? Their very names are an encumbrance to a Norman knight's mouth, and have, as it were, a flavour of bacon. Give me a stoup of wine, as jolly Prince John said, that I may wash away the relish; place it in the armoury, and thither lead the prisoners.'

His commands were obeyed; and, upon entering that Gothic apartment, hung with many spoils won by his own valour and that of his father, he found a flagon of wine on the massive oaken table, and the two Saxon captives under the guard of four of his dependants. Front-de-Bœuf took a long draught of wine, and then addressed his prisoners; for the manner in which Wamba drew the cap over his face, the change of dress, the gloomy and broken light, and the Baron's imperfect acquaintance with the features of Cedric, who avoided his Norman neighbours, and seldom stirred beyond his own domains, prevented him from discovering that the most important of his captives had made his escape.

'Gallants of England,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'how relish ye your entertainment at Torquilstone? Are ye yet aware what your *surguedy* and *outracundance*¹ merit, for scoffing at the entertainment of a prince of the house of Anjou? Have ye forgotten how ye requited the unmerited hospitality of the royal John? By God and St. Denis, an ye pay not the richer ransom, I will hang ye up by the feet from the iron bars of these windows, till the kites and hooded crows have made skeletons of you! Speak out, ye Saxon dogs — what bid ye for your worthless lives? How say you, you of Rotherwood?'

'Not a doit I,' answered poor Wamba; 'and for hanging up by the feet, my brain has been topsy-turvy, they say, ever since the biggin was bound first round my head; so turning me upside down may peradventure restore it again.'

'St. Genevieve!' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'what have we got here?' And with the back of his hand he struck Cedric's cap from the head of the Jester, and throwing open his collar, discovered the fatal badge of servitude, the silver collar round his neck.

'Giles — Clement — dogs and varlets!' exclaimed the furious Norman, 'what have you brought me here?'

'I think I can tell you,' said De Bracy, who just entered the apartment. 'This is Cedric's clown, who fought so manful a skirmish with Isaac of York about a question of precedence.'

'I shall settle it for them both,' replied Front-de-Bœuf; 'they shall hang on the same gallows, unless his master and this boar of Coningsburgh will pay well for their lives. Their wealth is the least they can surrender; they must also carry off with them the swarms that are besetting the castle, subscribe a surrender of their pretended immunities, and live under us as serfs and vassals; too happy if, in the new world that is about to begin, we leave them the breath of their nostrils. Go,' said he to two of his attendants, 'fetch me the right Cedric hither, and I pardon your error for once; the rather that you but mistook a fool for a Saxon franklin.'

'Ay, but,' said Wamba, 'your chivalrous excellency will find there are more fools than franklins among us.'

'What means the knave?' said Front-de-Bœuf, looking towards his followers, who, lingering and loth, faltered forth their belief that, if this were not Cedric who was there in presence, they knew not what was become of him.

'Saints of Heaven!' exclaimed De Bracy, 'he must have escaped in the monk's garments!'

¹ *Surguedy* and *outracundance* — insolence and presumption.

'Fiends of hell!' echoed Front-de-Bœuf, 'it was then the bear of Rotherwood whom I ushered to the postern, and dismissed with my own hands! And thou,' he said to Wamba, 'whose folly could overreach the wisdom of idiots yet more gross than thyself — I will give thee holy orders — I will shave thy crown for thee! Here, let them tear the scalp from his head, and then pitch him headlong from the battlements. Thy trade is to jest, canst thou jest now?'

'You deal with me better than your word, noble knight,' whimpered forth poor Wamba, whose habits of buffoonery were not to be overcome even by the immediate prospect of death; 'if you give me the red cap you propose, out of a simple monk you will make a cardinal.'

'The poor wretch,' said De Bracy, 'is resolved to die in his vocation. Front-de-Bœuf, you shall not slay him. Give him to me to make sport for my Free Companions. How sayest thou, knave? Wilt thou take heart of grace, and go to the wars with me?'

'Ay, with my master's leave,' said Wamba; 'for, look you, I must not slip collar (and he touched that which he wore) without his permission.'

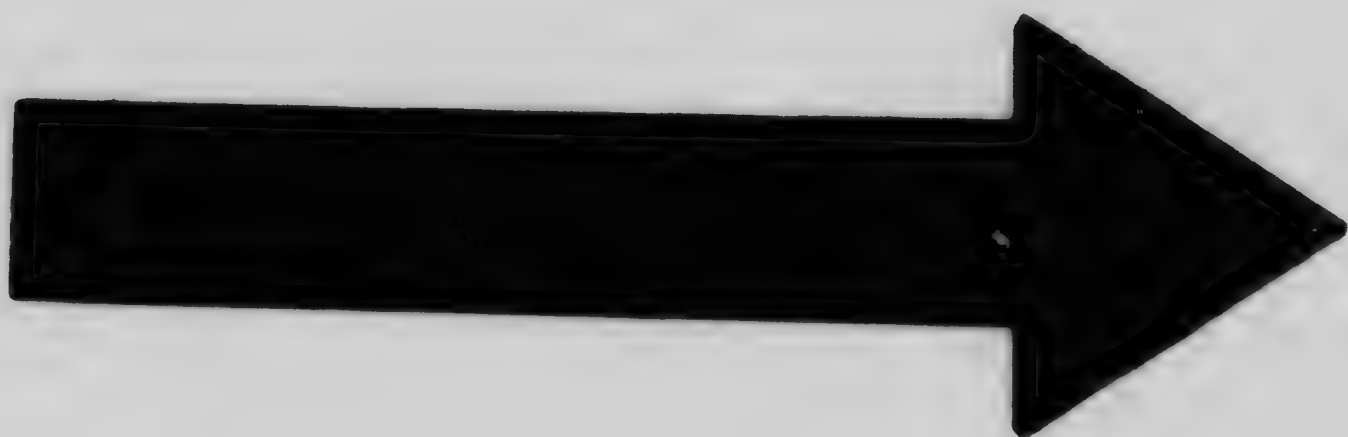
'Oh, a Norman saw will soon cut a Saxon collar,' said De Bracy.

'Ay, noble sir,' said Wamba, 'and thence goes the proverb —

Norman saw on English oak,
On English neck a Norman yoke;
Norman spoon in English dish,
And England ruled as Normans wish;
Blithe world in England never will be more,
Till England's rid of all the four.'

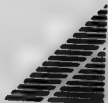
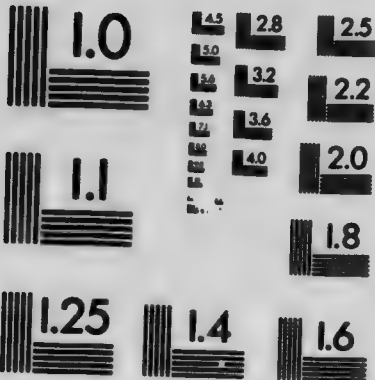
'Thou dost well, De Bracy,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'to stand there listening to a fool's jargon, when destruction is gaping for us! Seest thou not we are overreached, and that our proposed mode of communicating with our friends without has been disconcerted by this same motley gentleman thou art so fond to brother? What views have we to expect but instant storm?'

'To the battlements then,' said De Bracy; 'when didst thou ever see me the graver for the thoughts of battle? Call the Templar yonder, and let him fight but half as well for his life as he has done for his order. Make thou to the walls thyself with thy huge body. Let me do my poor endeavour in my own way, and I tell thee the Saxon outlaws may as well attempt



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to scale the clouds as the castle of Torquilstone; or, if you will treat with the banditti, why not employ the mediation of this worthy franklin, who seems in such deep contemplation of the wine-flagon? Here, Saxon,' he continued, addressing Athelstane, and handing the cup to him, 'rinse thy throat with that noble liquor, and rouse up thy soul to say what thou wilt do for thy liberty.'

'What a man of mould may,' answered Athelstane, 'providing it be what a man of manhood ought. Dismiss me free, with my companions, and I will pay a ransom of a thousand marks.'

'And wilt moreover assure us the retreat of that scum of mankind who are swarming around the castle, contrary to God's peace and the king's?' said Front-de-Bœuf.

'In so far as I can,' answered Athelstane, 'I will withdraw them; and I fear not but that my father Cedric will do his best to assist me.'

'We are agreed then,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'thou and they are to be set at freedom, and peace is to be on both sides, for payment of a thousand marks. It is a trifling ransom, Saxon, and thou wilt owe gratitude to the moderation which accepts of it in exchange of your persons. But mark, this extends not to the Jew Isaac.'

'Nor to the Jew Isaac's daughter,' said the Templar, who had now joined them.

'Neither,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'belong to this Saxon's company.'

'I were unworthy to be called Christian, if they did,' replied Athelstane; 'deal with the unbelievers as ye list.'

'Neither does the ransom include the Lady Rowena,' said De Bracy. 'It shall never be said I was scared out of a fair prize without striking a blow for it.'

'Neither,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'does our treaty refer to this wretched Jester, whom I retain, that I may make him an example to every knave who turns jest into earnest.'

'The Lady Rowena,' answered Athelstane, with the most steady countenance, 'is my affianced bride. I will be drawn by wild horses before I consent to part with her. The slave Wamba has this day saved the life of my father Cedric. I will lose mine ere a hair of his head be injured.'

'Thy affianced bride! The Lady Rowena the affianced bride of a vassal like thee!' said De Bracy. 'Saxon, thou dreamest that the days of thy seven kingdoms are returned

again. I tell thee, the princes of the house of Anjou confer not their wards on men of such lineage as thine.'

'My lineage, proud Norman,' replied Athelstane, 'is drawn from a source more pure and ancient than that of a beggarly Frenchman, whose living is won by selling the blood of the thieves whom he assembles under his paltry standard. Kings were my ancestors, strong in war and wise in council, who every day feasted in their hall more hundreds than thou canst number individual followers; whose names have been sung by minstrels, and their laws recorded by Wittenagemotes; whose bones were interred amid the prayers of saints, and over whose tombs minsters have been builded.'

'Thou hast it, De Bracy,' said Front-de-Bœuf, well pleased with the rebuff which his companion had received; 'the Saxon hath hit thee fairly.'

'As fairly as a captive can strike,' said De Bracy, with apparent carelessness; 'for he whose hands are tied should have his tongue at freedom. But the glibness of reply, comrade,' rejoined he, speaking to Athelstane, 'will not win the freedom of the Lady Rowena.'

To this Athelstane, who had already made a longer speech than was his custom to do on any topic, however interesting, returned no answer. The conversation was interrupted by the arrival of a menial, who announced that a monk demanded admittance at the postern gate.

'In the name of St. Bennet, the prince of these bull-beggars,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'have we a real monk this time, or another impostor? Search him, slaves; for an ye suffer a second impostor to be palmed upon you, I will have your eyes torn out, and hot coals put into the sockets.'

'Let me endure the extremity of your anger, my lord,' said Giles, 'if this be not a real shaveling. Your squire Jocelyn knows him well, and will vouch him to be Brother Ambrose, a monk in attendance upon the Prior of Jorvaulx.'

'Admit him,' said Front-de-Bœuf; 'most likely he brings us news from his jovial master. Surely the devil keeps holiday, and the priests are relieved from duty, that they are strolling thus wildly through the country. Remove these prisoners; and, Saxon, think on what thou hast heard.'

'I claim,' said Athelstane, 'an honourable imprisonment, with due care of my board and of my couch, as becomes my rank, and as is due to one who is in treaty for ransom. Moreover, I hold him that deems himself the best of you bound to

answer to me with his body for this aggression on my freedom. This defiance hath already been sent to thee by thy sewer; thou underliest it, and art bound to answer me. There lies my glove.'

'I answer not the challenge of my prisoner,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'nor shalt thou, Maurice de Bracy. Giles,' he continued, 'hang the franklin's glove upon the tine of yonder branched antlers; there shall it remain until he is a free man. Should he then presume to demand it, or to affirm he was unlawfully made my prisoner, by the belt of St. Christopher, he will speak to one who hath never refused to meet a foe on foot or on horseback, alone or with his vassals at his back!'

The Saxon prisoners were accordingly removed, just as they introduced the monk Ambrose, who appeared to be in great perturbation.

'This is the real *Deus vobiscum*,' said Wamba, as he passed the reverend brother; 'the others were but counterfeits.'

'Holy Mother!' said the monk, as he addressed the assembled knights, 'I am at last safe and in Christian keeping!'

'Safe thou art,' replied De Bracy, 'and for Christianity, here is the stout Baron Reginald Front-de-Bœuf, whose utter abomination is a Jew; and the good Knight Templar, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whose trade is to slay Saracens. If these are not good marks of Christianity, I know no other which they bear about them.'

'Ye are friends and allies ' our reverend father in God, Aymer, Prior of Jorvaulx,' said the monk, without noticing the tone of De Bracy's reply; 'ye owe him aid both by knightly faith and holy charity; for what saith the blessed St. Augustin, in his treatise *De Civitate Dei*——'

'What saith the devil!' interrupted Front-de-Bœuf; 'or rather what dost *thou* say, Sir Priest? We have little time to hear texts from the holy fathers.'

'*Sancta Maria!*' ejaculated Father Ambrose, 'how prompt to ire are these unhallowed laymen! But be it known to you, brave knights, that certain murderous caitiffs, casting behind them fear of God and reverence of His church, and not regarding the bull of the holy see, *Si quis, suadente Diabolo*——'

'Brother priest,' said the Templar, 'all this we know or guess at; tell us plainly, is thy master, the Prior, made prisoner, and to whom?'

'Surely,' said Ambrose, 'he is in the hands of the men of Belial, infesters of these woods, and contemnners of the holy

text, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets nought of evil."

'Here is a new argument for our swords, sirs,' said Front-de-Bœuf, turning to his companions; 'and so, instead of reaching us any assistance, the Prior of Jorvaulx requests aid at our hands? A man is well helped of these lazy churchmen when he hath most to do! But speak out, priest, and say at once what doth thy master expect from us?'

'So please you,' said Ambrose, 'violent hands having been imposed on my reverend superior, contrary to the holy ordinance which I did already quote, and the men of Belial having rifled his mails and budgets, and stripped him of two hundred marks of pure refined gold, they do yet demand of him a large sum besides, ere they will suffer him to depart from their uncircumcised hands. Wherefore the reverend father in God prays you, as his dear friends, to rescue him, either by paying down the ransom at which they hold him, or by force of arms, at your best discretion.'

'The foul fiend quell the Prior!' said Front-de-Bœuf; 'his morning's draught has been a deep one. When did thy master hear of a Norman baron unbuckling his purse to relieve a churchman, whose bags are ten times as weighty as ours? And how can we do aught by valour to free him, that are cooped up here by ten times our number, and expect an assault every moment?'

'And that was what I was about to tell you,' said the monk, 'had your hastiness allowed me time. But, God help me, I am old, and these foul onslaughts distract an aged man's brain. Nevertheless, it is of verity that they assemble a camp, and raise a bank against the walls of this castle.'

'To the battlements!' cried De Bracy, 'and let us mark what these knaves do without'; and so saying, he opened a latticed window which led to a sort of bartizan or projecting balcony, and immediately called from thence to those in the apartment—'St. Denis, but the old monk hath brought true tidings! They bring forward mantelets and pavisses,¹ and the archers muster on the skirts of the wood like a dark cloud before a hail-storm.'

Reginald Front-de-Bœuf also looked out upon the field, and immediately snatched his bugle; and after winding a long and loud blast, commanded his men to their posts on the walls.

'De Bracy, look to the eastern side where the walls are

¹ See Note 13.

lowest. Noble Bois-Guilbert, thy trade hath well taught thee how to attack and defend, look thou to the western side. I myself will take post at the barbican. Yet, do not confine your exertions to any one spot, noble friends! We must this day be everywhere, and multiply ourselves, were it possible, so as to carry by our presence succour and relief wherever the attack is hottest. Our numbers are few, but activity and courage may supply that defect, since we have only to do with rascal clowns.

'But, noble knights,' exclaimed Father Ambrose, amidst the bustle and confusion occasioned by the preparations for defence, 'will none of ye hear the message of the reverend father in God, Aymer, Prior of Jorvaulx? I beseech thee to hear me, noble Sir Reginald!'

'Go patter thy petitions to Heaven,' said the fierce Norman, 'for we on earth have no time to listen to them. Ho! there, Anselm! see that seething pitch and oil are ready to pour on the heads of these audacious traitors. Look that the cross-bowmen lack not bolts.' Fling abroad my banner with the old bull's head; the knaves shall soon find with whom they have to do this day!

'But, noble sir,' continued the monk, persevering in his endeavours to draw attention, 'consider my vows of obedience, and let me discharge myself of my superior's errand.'

'Away with this prating dotard,' said Front-de-Bœuf; 'lock him up in the chapel to tell his beads till the broil be over. It will be a . . . thing to the saints in Torquilstone to hear aves and paters; they have not been so honoured, I trow, since they were cut out of stone.'

'Blaspheme not the holy saints, Sir Reginald,' said De Bracy, 'we shall have need of their aid to-day before yon rascal rout disband.'

'I expect little aid from their hand,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'unless we were to hurl them from the battlements on the heads of the villains. There is a huge lumbering St. Christopher yonder, sufficient to bear a whole company to the earth.'

The Templar had in the meantime been looking out on the proceedings of the besiegers, with rather more attention than the brutal Front-de-Bœuf or his giddy companion.

'By the faith of mine order,' he said, 'these men approach with more touch of discipline than could have been judged,

¹ See Bolts and Shafts. Note 14.

however they come by it. See ye how dexterously they avail themselves of every cover which a tree or bush affords, and shun exposing themselves to the shot of our cross-bows? I spy neither banner nor pennon among them, and yet will I gage my golden chain that they are led on by some noble knight or gentleman, skilful in the practice of wars.'

'I espy him,' said De Bracy; 'I see the waving of a knight's crest, and the gleam of his armour. See yon tall man in the black mail, who is busied marshalling the farther troop of the rascaille yeomen; by St. Denis, I hold him to be the same whom we called *Le Noir Faincant*, who overthrew thee, Front-de-Bœuf, in the lists at Ashby.'

'So much the better,' said Front-de-Bœuf, 'that he comes here to give me my revenge. Some hilding fellow he must be, who dared not stay to assert his claim to the tourney prize which chance had assigned him. I should in vain have sought for him where knights and nobles seek their foes, and right glad am I he hath here shown himself among yon villain yeomanry.'

The demonstrations of the enemy's immediate approach cut off all farther discourse. Each knight repaired to his post, and at the head of the few followers whom they were able to muster, and who were in numbers inadequate to defend the whole extent of the walls, they awaited with calm determination the threatened assault.

CHAPTER XXVIII

This wandering race, sever'd from other men,
Boast yet their intercourse with human arts;
The seas, the woods, the deserts, which they haunt,
Find them acquainted with their secret treasures;
And unregarded herbs, and flowers, and blossoms,
Display undream'd-of powers when gather'd by them.

The Jew.

OUR history must needs retrograde for the space of a few pages, to inform the reader of certain passages material to his understanding the rest of this important narrative. His own intelligence may indeed have easily anticipated that, when *Ivanhoe* sunk down, and seemed abandoned by all the world, it was the importunity of Rebecca which prevailed on her father to have the gallant young warrior transported from the lists to the house which, for the time, the Jews inhabited in the suburbs of Ashby.

It would not have been difficult to have persuaded Isaac to this step in any other circumstances, for his disposition was kind and grateful. But he had also the prejudices and scrupulous timidity of his persecuted people, and those were to be conquered.

'Holy Abraham!' he exclaimed, 'he is a good youth, and my heart bleeds to see the gore trickle down his rich embroidered hacqueton, and his corslet of goodly price; but to carry him to our house! damsel, hast thou well considered? He is a Christian, and by our law we may not deal with the stranger and Gentile, save for the advantage of our commerce.'

'Speak not so, my dear father,' replied Rebecca; 'we may not indeed mix with them in banquet and in jollity; but in wounds and in misery, the Gentile becometh the Jew's brother.'

'I would I knew what the Rabbi Jacob ben Tudela would opine on it,' replied Isaac; 'nevertheless, the good youth must bleed to death. Let Seth and Reuben bear him to Ashby.'

'Nay, let them place him in my litter,' said Rebecca; 'I will mount one of the palfreys.'

'That were to expose thee to the gaze of those dogs of Ishmael and of Edom,' whispered Isaac, with a suspicious glance towards the crowd of knights and squires. But Rebecca was already busied in carrying her charitable purpose into effect, and listed not what he said, until Isaac, seizing the sleeve of her mantle, again exclaimed, in a hurried voice — 'Beard of Aaron! what if the youth perish! If he die in our custody, shall we not be held guilty of his blood, and be torn to pieces by the multitude!'

'He will not die, my father,' said Rebecca, gently extricating herself from the grasp of Isaac — 'he will not die unless we abandon him; and if so, we are indeed answerable for his blood to God and to man.'

'Nay,' said Isaac, releasing his hold, 'it grieveth me as much to see the drops of his blood as if they were so many golden byzants from mine own purse; and I well know that the lessons of Miriam, daughter of the Rabbi Manasses of Byzantium, whose soul is in Paradise, have made thee skilful in the art of healing, and that thou knowest the craft of herbs and the force of elixirs. Therefore, do as thy mind giveth thee: thou art a good damsel — a blessing, and a crown, and a song of rejoicing unto me and to my house, and unto the people of my fathers.'

The apprehensions of Isaac, however, were not ill founded; and the generous and grateful benevolence of his daughter exposed her, on her return to Ashby, to the unhallowed gaze of Brian de Bois-Guilbert. The Templar twice passed and repassed them on the road, fixing his bold and ardent look on the beautiful Jewess; and we have already seen the consequences of the admiration which her charms excited, when he threw her into the power of that unprincipled voluptu-

Rebecca lost no time in causing the patient to be transported to their temporary dwelling, and proceeded with her own hands to examine and to bind up his wounds. The youngest reader of romances and romantic ballads must recollect how often the females, during the dark ages, as they are called, were initiated into the mysteries of surgery, and how frequently the gallant knight submitted the wounds of his person to her cure whose eyes had yet more deeply penetrated his heart.

But the Jews, both male and female, possessed and prac-

tined the medical science in all its branches, and the monarchs and powerful barons of the time frequently committed themselves to the charge of some experienced sage among this despised people when wounded or in sickness. The aid of the Jewish physicians was not less eagerly sought after, though a general belief prevailed among the Christians that the Jewish rabbins were deeply acquainted with the occult sciences, and particularly with the cabalistical art, which had its name and origin in the studies of the sages of Israel. Neither did the rabbins disown such acquaintance with supernatural arts, which added nothing — for what could add aught? — to the hatred with which the nation was regarded, while it diminished the contempt with which that malevolence was mingled. A Jewish magician might be the subject of equal abhorrence with a Jewish usurer, but he could not be equally despised. It is, besides, probable, considering the wonderful cures they are said to have performed, that the Jews possessed some secrets of the healing art peculiar to themselves, and which, with the exclusive spirit arising out of their condition, they took great care to conceal from the Christians amongst whom they dwelt.

The beautiful Rebecca had been heedfully brought up in all the knowledge proper to her nation, which her apt and powerful mind had retained, arranged, and enlarged, in the course of a progress beyond her years, her sex, and even the age in which she lived. Her knowledge of medicine and of the healing art had been acquired under an aged Jew, the daughter of one of their most celebrated doctors, who loved Rebecca as her own child, and was believed to have communicated to her secrets which had been left to herself by her sage father at the same time, and under the same circumstances. The fate of Miriam had indeed been to fall a sacrifice to the fanaticisms of the times; but her secrets had survived in her apt pupil.

Rebecca, thus endowed with knowledge as with beauty, was universally revered and admired by her own tribe, who almost regarded her as one of those gifted women mentioned in the sacred history. Her father himself, out of reverence for her talents, which involuntarily mingled itself with his unbounded affection, permitted the maiden a greater liberty than was usually indulged to those of her sex by the habits of her people, and was, as we have just seen, frequently guided by her opinion, even in preference to his own.

When Ivanhoe reached the habitation of Isaac, he was still in a state of unconsciousness, owing to the profuse loss of blood

which had taken place during his exertions in the lists. Rebecca examined the wound, and having applied to it such vulnerary remedies as her art prescribed, informed her father that if fever could be averted, of which the great bleeding rendered her little apprehensive, and if the healing balsam of Miriam retained its virtue, there was nothing to fear for his guest's life, and that he might with safety travel to York with them on the ensuing day. Isaac looked a little blank at this annunciation. His charity would willingly have stopped short at Ashby, or at most would have left the wounded Christian to be tended in the house where he was residing at present, with an assurance to the Hebrew to whom it belonged that all expenses should be duly discharged. To this, however, Rebecca opposed many reasons, of which we shall only mention two that had peculiar weight with Isaac. The one was, that she would on no account put the phial of precious balsam into the hands of another physician even of her own tribe, lest that valuable mystery should be discovered; the other, that this wounded knight, Wilfred of Ivanhoe, was an intimate favourite of Richard Cœur-de-Lion, and that, in case the monarch should return, Isaac, who had supplied his brother John with treasure to prosecute his rebellious purposes, would stand in no small need of a powerful protector who enjoyed Richard's favour.

'Thou art speaking but sooth, Rebecca,' said Isaac, giving way to these weighty arguments: 'it were an offending of Heaven to betray the secrets of the blessed Miriam; for the good which Heaven giveth is not rashly to be squandered upon others, whether it be talents of gold and shekels of silver, or whether it be the secret mysteries of a wise physician; assuredly they should be preserved to those to whom Providence hath vouchsafed them. And him whom the Nazarenes of England call the Lion's Heart — assuredly it were better for me to fall into the hands of a strong lion of Idumea than into his, if he shall have grace of my dealings with his brother. Wherefore I will lend ear to thy counsel, and this youth shall journey with us to York, and our house shall be as a home to him until his wounds shall be healed. And if he of the Lion Heart shall return to the land, as is now noised abroad, then shall this Wilfred of Ivanhoe be unto me as a wall of defence, when the king's displeasure shall burn high against thy father. And if he doth not return, this Wilfred may nathless repay us our charges when he shall gain treasure by the strength of his spear and of his sword, even as he did yesterday and this day

also. For the youth is a good youth, and keepeth the day which he appointeth, and restoreth that which he borroweth, and succoureth the Israelite, even the child of my father's house, when it is encompassed by strong thieves and sons of Belial.'

It was not until evening was nearly closed that Ivanhoe was restored to consciousness of his situation. He awoke from a broken slumber, under the confused impressions which are naturally attendant on the recovery from a state of insensibility. He was unable for some time to recall exactly to memory the circumstances which had preceded his fall in the lists, or to make out any connected chain of the events in which he had been engaged upon the yesterday. A sense of wounds and injury, joined to great weakness and exhaustion, was mingled with the recollection of blows dealt and received, of steeds rushing upon each other, overthrowing and overthrown, of shouts and clashing of arms, and all the heady tumult of a confused fight. An effort to draw aside the curtain of his couch was in some degree successful, although rendered difficult by the pain of his wound.

To his great surprise, he found himself in a room magnificently furnished, but having cushions instead of chairs to rest upon, and in other respects partaking so much of Oriental costume that he began to doubt whether he had not, during his sleep, been transported back again to the land of Palestine. The impression was increased when, the tapestry being drawn aside, a female form, dressed in a rich habit, which partook more of the Eastern taste than that of Europe, glided through the door which it concealed, and was followed by a swarthy domestic.

As the wounded knight was about to address this fair apparition, she imposed silence by placing her slender finger upon her ruby lips, while the attendant, approaching him, proceeded to uncover Ivanhoe's side, and the lovely Jewess satisfied herself that the bandage was in its place, and the wound doing well. She performed her task with a graceful and dignified simplicity and modesty, which might, even in more civilised days, have served to redeem it from whatever might seem repugnant to female delicacy. The idea of so young and beautiful a person engaged in attendance on a sick-bed, or in dressing the wound of one of a different sex, was melted away and lost in that of a beneficent being contributing her effectual aid to relieve pain, and to avert the stroke of death. Rebecca's few and brief directions were given in the Hebrew language to the

old domestic ; and he, who had been frequently her assistant in similar cases, obeyed them without reply.

The accents of an unknown tongue, however harsh they might have sounded when uttered by another, had, coming from the beautiful Rebecca, the romantic and pleasing effect which fancy ascribes to the charms pronounced by some beneficent fairy, unintelligible, indeed, to the ear, but from the sweetness of utterance and benignity of aspect which accompanied them touching and affecting to the heart. Without making an attempt at further question, Ivanhoe suffered them in silence to take the measures they thought most proper for his recovery ; and it was not until these were completed, and his kind physician about to retire, that his curiosity could no longer be suppressed. 'Gentle maiden,' he began in the Arabian tongue, with which his Eastern travels had rendered him familiar, and which he thought most likely to be understood by the turbaned and captailed damsel who stood before him — 'I pray you, gentle maiden, of your courtesy —'

But here he was interrupted by his fair physician, a smile which she could scarce suppress dimpling for an instant a face whose general expression was that of contemplative melancholy. 'I am of England, Sir Knight, and speak the English tongue, although my dress and my lineage belong to another climate.'

'Noble damsel —' again the Knight of Ivanhoe began, and again Rebecca hastened to interrupt him.

'Bestow not on me, Sir Knight,' she said, 'the epithet of noble. It is well you should speedily know that your hand-maiden is a poor Jewess, the daughter of that Isaac of York to whom you were so lately a good and kind lord. It well becomes him and those of his household to render to you such careful tendance as your present state necessarily demands.'

I know not whether the fair Rowena would have been altogether satisfied with the species of emotion with which her devoted knight had hitherto gazed on the beautiful features, and fair form, and lustrous eyes of the lovely Rebecca — eyes whose brilliancy was shaded, and, as it were, mellowed, by the fringe of her long silken eyelashes, and which a minstrel would have compared to the evening star darting its rays through a bower of jessamine. But Ivanhoe was too good a Catholic to retain the same class of feelings towards a Jewess. This Rebecca had foreseen, and for this very purpose she had hastened to mention her father's name and lineage ; yet — for the fair and wise daughter of Isaac was not without a touch of female weakness

— she could not but sigh internally when the glance of respectful admiration, not altogether unmixed with tenderness, with which Ivanhoe had hitherto regarded his unknown benefactress, was exchanged at once for a manner cold, composed, and collected, and fraught with no deeper feeling than that which expressed a grateful sense of courtesy received from an unexpected quarter, and from one of an inferior race. It was not that Ivanhoe's former carriage expressed more than that general devotional homage which youth always pays to beauty; yet it was mortifying that one word should operate as a spell to remove poor Rebecca, who could not be supposed altogether ignorant of her title to such homage, into a degraded class, to whom it could not be honourably rendered.

But the gentleness and candour of Rebecca's nature imputed no fault to Ivanhoe for sharing in the universal prejudices of his age and religion. On the contrary, the fair Jewess, though sensible her patient now regarded her as one of a race of reprobation, with whom it was disgraceful to hold any beyond the most necessary intercourse, ceased not to pay the same patient and devoted attention to his safety and convalescence. She informed him of the necessity they were under of removing to York, and of her father's resolution to transport him thither, and tend him in his own house until his health should be restored. Ivanhoe expressed great repugnance to this plan, which he grounded on unwillingness to give farther trouble to his benefactors.

'Was there not,' he said, 'in Ashby, or near it, some Saxon franklin, or even some wealthy peasant, who would endure the burden of a wounded countryman's residence with him until he should be again able to bear his armour? Was there no convent of Saxon endowment, where he could be received? Or could he not be transported as far as Burton, where he was sure to find hospitality with Waltheoff, the Abbot of St. Withold's, to whom he was related?'

'Any, the worst of these harbourages,' said Rebecca, with a melancholy smile, 'would unquestionably be more fitting for your residence than the abode of a despised Jew; yet, Sir Knight, unless you would dismiss your physician, you cannot change your lodging. Our nation, as you well know, can cure wounds, though we deal not in inflicting them; and in our family, in particular, are secrets which have been handed down since the days of Solomon, and of which you have already experienced the advantages. No Nazarene — I crave your for-

giveness, Sir Knight — no Christian leech, within the four seas of Britain, could enable you to bear your corslet within a month.'

'And how soon wilt *thou* enable me to brook it?' said Ivanhoe, impatiently.

'Within eight days, if thou wilt be patient and conformable to my directions,' replied Rebecca.

'By Our Blessed Lady,' said Wilfred, 'if it be not a sin to name her here, it is no time for me or any true knight to be bedridden; and if thou accomplish thy promise, maiden, I will pay thee with my casque full of crowns, come by them as I may.'

'I will accomplish my promise,' said Rebecca, 'and thou shalt bear thine armour on the eighth day from hence, if thou wilt grant me but one boon in the stead of the silver thou dost promise me.'

'If it be within my power, and such as a true Christian knight may yield to one of thy people,' replied Ivanhoe, 'I will grant thy boon blithely and thankfully.'

'Nay,' answered Rebecca, 'I will but pray of thee to believe henceforward that a Jew may do good service to a Christian, without desiring other guerdon than the blessing of the Great Father who made both Jew and Gentile.'

'It were sin to doubt it, maiden,' replied Ivanhoe; 'and I repose myself on thy skill without further scruple or question, well trusting you will enable me to bear my corslet on the eighth day. And now, my kind leech, let me inquire of the news abroad. What of the noble Saxon Cedric and his household? what of the lovely Lady ——' He stopt, as if unwilling to speak Rowena's name in the house of a Jew — 'Of her, I mean, who was named Queen of the tournament?'

'And who was selected by you, Sir Knight, to hold that dignity, with judgment which was admired as much as your valour,' replied Rebecca.

The blood which Ivanhoe had lost did not prevent a flush from crossing his cheek, feeling that he had incautiously betrayed his deep interest in Rowena by the awkward attempt he had made to conceal it.

'It was less of her I would speak,' said he, 'than of Prince John; and I would fain know somewhat of a faithful squire, and why he now attends me not?'

'Let me use my authority as a leech,' answered Rebecca, 'and enjoin you to keep silence, and avoid agitating reflections

whilst I apprise you of what you desire to know. Prince John hath broken off the tournament, and set forward in all haste towards York, with the nobles, knights, and churchmen of his party, after collecting such sums as they could wring, by fair means or foul, from those who are esteemed the wealthy of the land. It is said he designs to assume his brother's crown.

'Not without a blow struck in his defence,' said Ivanhoe, raising himself upon the couch, 'if there were but one true subject in England. I will fight for Richard's title with the best of them—ay, one to two, in his just quarrel!'

'But that you may be able to do so,' said Rebecca, touching his shoulder with her hand, 'you must now observe my directions, and remain quiet.'

'True, maiden,' said Ivanhoe, 'as quiet as these disquieted times will permit. And of Cedric and his household?'

'His steward came but brief while since,' said the Jewess, 'panting with haste, to ask my father for certain monies, the price of wool the growth of Cedric's flocks, and from him I learned that Cedric and Athelstane of Coningsburgh had left Prince John's lodging in high displeasure, and were about to set forth on their return homeward.'

'Went any lady with them to the banquet?' said Wilfred.

'The Lady Rowena,' said Rebecca, answering the question with more precision than it had been asked—'the Lady Rowena went not to the Prince's feast, and, as the steward reported to us, she is now on her journey back to Rotherwood with her guardian Cedric. And touching your faithful squire Gurth—'

'Ha!' exclaimed the knight, 'knowest thou his name? But thou dost,' he immediately added, 'and well thou mayest, for it was from thy hand, and, as I am now convinced, from thine own generosity of spirit, that he received but yesterday a hundred zecchins.'

'Speak not of that,' said Rebecca, blushing deeply; 'I see how easy it is for the tongue to betray what the heart would gladly conceal.'

'But this sum of gold,' said Ivanhoe, gravely, 'my honour is concerned in repaying it to your father.'

'Let it be as thou wilt,' said Rebecca, 'when eight days have passed away; but think not, and speak not, now of aught that may retard thy recovery.'

'Be it so, kind maiden,' said Ivanhoe; 'it were most ungrate-

ful to dispute thy commands. But one word of the fate of poor Gurth, and I have done with questioning thee.'

'I grieve to tell thee, Sir Knight,' answered the Jewess, 'that he is in custody by the order of Cedric.' And then observing the distress which her communication gave to Wilfred, she instantly added, 'But the steward Oswald said, that if nothing occurred to renew his master's displeasure against him, he was sure that Cedric would pardon Gurth, a faithful serf, and one who stood high in favour, and who had but committed this error out of the love that he bore to Cedric's son. And he said, moreover, that he and his comrades, and especially Wamba, the Jester, were resolved to warn Gurth to make his escape by the way, in case Cedric's ire against him could not be mitigated.'

'Would to God they may keep their purpose!' said Ivanhoe; 'but it seems as if I were destined to bring ruin on whomsoever hath shown kindness to me. My king, by whom I was honoured and distinguished — thou seest that the brother most indebted to him is raising his arms to grasp his crown; my regard hath brought restraint and trouble on the fairest of her sex; and now my father in his mood may slay this poor bondsman, but for his love and loyal service to me! Thou seest, maiden, what an ill-fated wretch thou dost labour to assist; be wise, and let me go, ere the misfortunes which track my footsteps like slot-hounds shall involve thee also in their pursuit.'

'Nay,' said Rebecca, 'thy weakness and thy grief, Sir Knight, make thee miscalculate the purposes of Heaven. Thou hast been restored to thy country when it most needed the assistance of a strong hand and a true heart, and thou hast humbled the pride of thine enemies and those of thy king, when their horn was most highly exalted; and for the evil which thou sustained, seest thou not that Heaven has raised thee a helper and a physician, even among the most despised of the land? Therefore, be of good courage, and trust that thou art preserved for some marvel which thine arm shall work before this people. Adieu; and having taken the medicine which I shall send thee by the hand of Reuben, compose thyself again to rest, that thou mayest be the more able to endure the journey on the succeeding day.'

Ivanhoe was convinced by the reasoning, and obeyed the directions, of Rebecca. The draught which Reuben administered was of a sedative and narcotic quality, and secured the patient sound and undisturbed slumbers. In the morning his kind

physician found him entirely free from feverish symptoms, and fit to undergo the fatigue of a journey.

He was deposited in the horse-litter which had brought him from the lists, and every precaution taken for his travelling with ease. In one circumstance only even the entreaties of Rebecca were unable to secure sufficient attention to the accommodation of the wounded knight. Isaac, like the enriched traveller of Juvenal's *Tenth Satire*, had ever the fear of robbery before his eyes, conscious that he would be alike accounted fair game by the marauding Norman noble and by the Saxon outlaw. He therefore journeyed at a great rate, and made short halts and shorter repasts, so that he passed by Cedric and Athelstane, who had several hours the start of him, but who had been delayed by their protracted feasting at the convent of St. Withold's. Yet such was the virtue of Miriam's balsam, or such the strength of Ivanhoe's constitution, that he did not sustain from the hurried journey that inconvenience which his kind physician had apprehended.

In another point of view, however, the Jew's haste proved somewhat more than good speed. The rapidity with which he insisted on travelling bred several disputes between him and the party whom he had hired to attend him as a guard. These men were Saxons, and not free by any means from the national love of ease and good living which the Normans stigmatised as laziness and gluttony. Reversing Shylock's position, they had accepted the employment in hopes of feeding upon the wealthy Jew, and were very much displeased when they found themselves disappointed by the rapidity with which he insisted on their proceeding. They remonstrated also upon the risk of damage to their horses by these forced marches. Finally, there arose betwixt Isaac and his satellites a deadly feud concerning the quantity of wine and ale to be allowed for consumption at each meal. And thus it happened, that when the alarm of danger approached, and that which Isaac feared was likely to come upon him, he was deserted by the discontented mercenaries, on whose protection he had relied without using the means necessary to secure their attachment.

In this deplorable condition, the Jew, with his daughter and her wounded patient, were found by Cedric, as has already been noticed, and soon afterwards fell into the power of De Bracy and his confederates. Little notice was at first taken of the horse-litter, and it might have remained behind but for the curiosity of De Bracy, who looked into it under the impression

that it might contain the object of his enterprise, for Rowena had not unveiled herself. But De Bracy's astonishment was considerable when he discovered that the litter contained a wounded man, who, conceiving himself to have fallen into the power of Saxon outlaws, with whom his name might be a protection for himself and his friends, frankly avowed himself to be Wilfred of Ivanhoe.

The ideas of chivalrous honour, which, amidst his wildness and levity, never utterly abandoned De Bracy, prohibited him from doing the knight any injury in his defenceless condition, and equally interdicted his betraying him to Front-de-Bœuf, who would have had no scruples to put to death, under any circumstances, the rival claimant of the fief of Ivanhoe. On the other hand, to liberate a suitor preferred by the Lady Rowena, as the events of the tournament, and indeed Wilfred's previous banishment from his father's house, had made matter of notoriety, was a pitch far above the flight of De Bracy's generosity. A middle course betwixt good and evil was all which he found himself capable of adopting, and he commanded two of his own squires to keep close by the litter, and to suffer no one to approach it. If questioned, they were directed by their master to say that the empty litter of the Lady Rowena was employed to transport one of their comrades who had been wounded in the scuffle. On arriving at Torquilstone, while the Knight Templar and the lord of that castle were each intent upon their own schemes, the one on the Jew's treasure, and the other on his daughter, De Bracy's squires conveyed Ivanhoe, still under the name of a wounded comrade, to a distant apartment. This explanation was accordingly returned by these men to Front-de-Bœuf, when he questioned them why they did not make for the battlements upon the alarm.

'A wounded companion!' he replied in great wrath and astonishment. 'No wonder that churls and yeomen wax so presumptuous as even to lay leaguer before castles, and that clowns and swineherds send defiance to nobles, since men-at-arms have turned sick men's nurses, and Free Companions are grown keepers of dying folks' curtains, when the castle is about to be assailed. To the battlements, ye loitering villains!' he exclaimed, raising his stentorian voice till the arches around rung again — 'to the battlements, or I will splinter your bones with this truncheon!'

The men sulkily replied, 'That they desired nothing better

than to go to the battlements, providing Front-de-Bœuf would bear them out with their master, who had commanded them to tend the dying man.'

'The dying man, knaves!' rejoined the baron; 'I promise thee, we shall all be dying men an we stand not to it the more stoutly. But I will relieve the guard upon this caitiff companion of yours. Here, Urfried — hag — fiend of a Saxon witch — hearest me not? Tend me this bedridden fellow since he must needs be tended, whilst these knaves use their weapons. Here be two arblasts, comrades, with windlances and quarrells¹ — to the barbican with you, and see you drive each bolt through a Saxon brain.'

The men, who, like most of their description, were fond of enterprise and detested inaction, went joyfully to the scene of danger as they were commanded, and thus the charge of Ivanhoe was transferred to Urfried, or Ulrica. But she, whose brain was burning with remembrance of injuries and with hopes of vengeance, was readily induced to devolve upon Rebecca the care of her patient.

¹ See Arblast, etc. Note 15.

CHAPTER XXIX

Ascend the watch-tower yonder, valiant soldier,
Look on the field, and say how goes the battle.

SCHILLER'S *Maid of Orleans*.

A MOMENT of peril is often also a moment of open-hearted kindness and affection. We are thrown off our guard by the general agitation of our feelings, and betray the intensity of those which, at more tranquil periods, our prudence at least conceals, if it cannot altogether suppress them. In finding herself once more by the side of Ivanhoe, Rebecca was astonished at the keen sensation of pleasure which she experienced, even at a time when all around them both was danger, if not despair. As she felt his pulse, and inquired after his health, there was a softness in her touch and in her accents, implying a kinder interest than she would herself have been pleased to have voluntarily expressed. Her voice faltered and her hand trembled, and it was only the cold question of Ivanhoe, 'Is it you, gentle maiden?' which recalled her to herself, and reminded her the sensations which she felt were not and could not be mutual. A sigh escaped, but it was scarce audible; and the questions which she asked the knight concerning his state of health were put in the tone of calm friendship. Ivanhoe answered her hastily that he was, in point of health, as well, and better, than he could have expected. 'Thanks,' he said, 'dear Rebecca, to thy helpful skill.'

'He calls me *dear* Rebecca,' said the maiden to herself, 'but it is in the cold and careless tone which ill suits the word. His war-horse, his hunting hound, are dearer to him than the despised Jewess!'

'My mind, gentle maiden,' continued Ivanhoe, 'is more disturbed by anxiety than my body with pain. From the speeches of these men who were my warders just now, I learn that I am a prisoner, and, if I judge aright of the loud hoarse

voice which even now despatched them hence on some military duty, I am in the castle of Front-de-Bœuf. If so, how will this end, or how can I protect Rowena and my father !'

'He names not the Jew or Jewess,' said Rebecca, internally ; 'yet what is our portion in him, and how justly am I punished by Heaven for letting my thoughts dwell upon him !' She hastened after this brief self-accusation to give Ivanhoe what information she could ; but it amounted only to this, that the Templar Bois-Guilbert and the Baron Front-de-Bœuf were commanders within the castle ; that it was beleaguered from without, but by whom she knew not. She added, that there was a Christian priest within the castle who might be possessed of more information.

'A Christian priest !' said the knight, joyfully ; 'fetch him hither, Rebecca, if thou canst. Say a sick man desires his ghostly counsel—say what thou wilt, but bring him ; something I must do or attempt, but how can I determine until I know how matters stand without !'

Rebecca, in compliance with the wishes of Ivanhoe, made that attempt to bring Cedric into the wounded knight's chamber which was defeated, as we have already seen, by the interference of Urfried, who had been also on the watch to intercept the supposed monk. Rebecca retired to communicate to Ivanhoe the result of her errand.

They had not much leisure to regret the failure of this source of intelligence, or to contrive by what means it might be supplied ; for the noise within the castle, occasioned by the defensive preparations, which had been considerable for some time, now increased into tenfold bustle and clamour. The heavy yet hasty step of the men-at-arms traversed the battlements, or resounded on the narrow and winding passages and stairs which led to the various bartizans and points of defence. The voices of the knights were heard, animating their followers, or directing means of defence, while their commands were often drowned in the clashing of armour, or the clamorous shouts of those whom they addressed. Tremendous as these sounds were, and yet more terrible from the awful event which they presaged, there was a sublimity mixed with them which Rebecca's high-toned mind could feel even in that moment of terror. Her eye kindled, although the blood fled from her cheeks ; and there was a strong mixture of fear, and of a thrilling sense of the sublime, as she repeated, half-whispering to herself, half-speaking to her companion, the sacred text—

'The quiver rattleth — the glittering spear and the shield — the noise of the captains and the shouting!'

But Ivanhoe was like the war-horse of that sublime passage, glowing with impatience at his inactivity, and with his ardent desire to mingle in the affray of which these sounds were the introduction. 'If I could but drag myself,' he said, 'to yonder window, that I might see how this brave game is like to go! If I had but bow to shoot a shaft, or battle-axe to strike were it but a single blow for our deliverance! It is in vain — it is in vain — I am alike nerveless and weaponless!'

'Fret not thyself, noble knight,' answered Rebecca, 'the sounds hath ceased of a sudden; it may be they join not battle.'

'Thou knowest nought of it,' said Wilfred, impatiently; 'this dead pause only shows that the men are at their posts on the walls, and expecting an instant attack; what we have heard was but the distant muttering of the storm: it will burst anon in all its fury. Could I but reach yonder window!'

'Thou wilt but injure thyself by the attempt, noble knight,' replied his attendant. Observing his extreme solicitude, she firmly added, 'I myself will stand at the lattice, and describe to you as I can what passes without.'

'You must not — you shall not!' exclaimed Ivanhoe. 'Each lattice, each aperture, will be soon a mark for the archers; some random shaft —'

'It shall be welcome!' murmured Rebecca, as with firm pace she ascended two or three steps, which led to the window of which they spoke.

'Rebecca — dear Rebecca!' exclaimed Ivanhoe, 'this is no maiden's pastime; do not expose thyself to wounds and death, and render me for ever miserable for having given the occasion; at least, cover thyself with yonder ancient buckler, and show as little of your person at the lattice as may be.'

Following with wonderful promptitude the directions of Ivanhoe, and availing herself of the protection of the large ancient shield, which she placed against the lower part of the window, Rebecca, with tolerable security to herself, could witness part of what was passing without the castle, and report to Ivanhoe the preparations which the assailants were making for the storm. Indeed, the situation which she thus obtained was peculiarly favourable for this purpose, because, being placed on an angle of the main building, Rebecca could not only see what passed beyond the precincts of the castle, but also commanded a view of the outwork likely to be the first object of the medi-

tated assault. It was an exterior fortification of no great height or strength, intended to protect the postern-gate, through which Cedric had been recently dismissed by Front-de-Bœuf. The castle moat divided this species of barbican from the rest of the fortress, so that, in case of its being taken, it was easy to cut off the communication with the main building, by withdrawing the temporary bridge. In the outwork was a sallyport corresponding to the postern of the castle, and the whole was surrounded by a strong palisade. Rebecca could observe, from the number of men placed for the defence of this post, that the besieged entertained apprehensions for its safety; and from the mustering of the assailants in a direction nearly opposite to the outwork, it seemed no less plain that it had been selected as a vulnerable point of attack.

These appearances she hastily communicated to Ivanhoe, and added, 'The skirts of the wood seem lined with archers, although only a few are advanced from its dark shadow.'

'Under what banner?' asked Ivanhoe.

'Under no ensign of war which I can observe,' answered Rebecca.

'A singular novelty,' muttered the knight, 'to advance to storm such a castle without pennon or banner displayed! Seest thou who they be that act as leaders?'

'A knight, clad in sable armour, is the most conspicuous,' said the Jewess; 'he alone is armed from head to heel, and seems to assume the direction of all around him.'

'What device does he bear on his shield?' replied Ivanhoe.

'Something resembling a bar of iron, and a padlock painted blue on the black shield.'¹

'A fetterlock and shackle-bolt azure,' said Ivanhoe; 'I know not who may bear the device, but well I ween it might now be mine own. Canst thou not see the motto?'

'Scarce the device itself at this distance,' replied Rebecca; 'but when the sun glances fair upon his shield it shows as I tell you.'

'Seem there no other leaders?' exclaimed the anxious inquirer.

'None of mark and distinction that I can behold from this station,' said Rebecca; 'but doubtless the other side of the castle is also assailed. They appear even now preparing to advance — God of Zion protect us! What a dreadful sight! Those who advance first bear huge shields and defences made

¹ See Heraldry. Note 16.

of plank ; the others follow, bending their bows as they come on. They raise their bows ! God of Moses, forgive the creatures Thou hast made !'

Her description was here suddenly interrupted by the signal for assault, which was given by the blast of a shrill bugle, and at once answered by a flourish of the Norman trumpets from the battlements, which, mingled with the deep and hollow clang of the *naques* (a species of kettle-drum), retorted in notes of defiance the challenge of the enemy. The shouts of both parties augmented the fearful din, the assailants crying, 'St. George for merry England !' and the Normans answering them with cries of '*En avant De Bracy ! Beau-seant ! Beau-seant ! Front-de-Bœuf à la rescousse !*' according to the war-cries of their different commanders.

It was not, however, by clamour that the contest was to be decided, and the desperate efforts of the assailants were met by an equally vigorous defence on the part of the besieged. The archers, trained by their woodland pastimes to the most effective use of the long-bow, shot, to use the appropriate phrase of the time, so 'wholly together,' that no point at which a defender could show the least part of his person escaped their cloth-yard shafts. By this heavy discharge, which continued as thick and sharp as hail, while, notwithstanding, every arrow had its individual aim, and flew by scores together against each embrasure and opening in the parapets, as well as at every window where a defender either occasionally had post, or might be suspected to be stationed — by this sustained discharge, two or three of the garrison were slain and several others wounded. But, confident in their armour of proof, and in the cover which their situation afforded, the followers of Front-de-Bœuf and his allies showed an obstinacy in defence proportioned to the fury of the attack, and replied with the discharge of their large cross-bows, as well as with their long-bows, slings, and other missile weapons, to the close and continued shower of arrows ; and, as the assailants were necessarily but indifferently protected, did considerably more damage than they received at their hand. The whizzing of shafts and of missiles on both sides was only interrupted by the shouts which arose when either side inflicted or sustained some notable loss.

'And I must lie here like a bedridden monk,' exclaimed Ivanhoe, 'while the game that gives me freedom or death is played out by the hand of others ! Look from the window once again, kind maiden, but beware that you are not marked

by the archers beneath. Look out once more, and tell me if they yet advance to the storm.'

With patient courage, strengthened by the interval which she had employed in mental devotion, Rebecca again took post at the lattice, sheltering herself, however, so as not to be visible from beneath.

'What dost thou see, Rebecca?' again demanded the wounded knight.

'Nothing but the cloud of arrows flying so thick as to dazzle mine eyes, and to hide the bowmen who shoot them.'

'That cannot endure,' said Ivanhoe; 'if they press not right on to carry the castle by pure force of arms, the archery may avail but little against stone walls and bulwarks. Look for the Knight of the Fetterlock, fair Rebecca, and see how he bears himself; for as the leader is, so will his followers be.'

'I see him not,' said Rebecca.

'Foul craven!' exclaimed Ivanhoe; 'does he blench from the helm when the wind blows highest?'

'He blenches not! — he blenches not!' said Rebecca, 'I see him now; he heads a body of men close under the outer barrier of the barbican.' They pull down the piles and palisades; they hew down the barriers with axes. His high black plume floats abroad over the throng, like a raven over the field of the slain. They have made a breach in the barriers — they rush in — they are thrust back! Front-de-Bœuf heads the defenders; I see his gigantic form above the press. They throng again to the breach, and the pass is disputed hand to hand, and man to man. God of Jacob! it is the meeting of two ² fierce tides — the conflict of two oceans moved by adverse winds!'

She turned her head from the lattice, as if unable longer to endure a sight so terrible.

'Look forth again, Rebecca,' said Ivanhoe, mistaking the cause of her retiring; 'the archery must in some degree have ceased, since they are now fighting hand to hand. Look again, there is now less danger.'

Rebecca again looked forth, and almost immediately exclaimed, 'Holy prophets of the law! Front-de-Bœuf and the Black Knight fight hand to hand on the breach, amid the roar of their followers, who watch the progress of the strife. Heaven strike with the cause of the oppressed and of the captive!' She then uttered a loud shriek, and exclaimed, 'He is down! — he is down!'

² See Barriers. Note 17.

'Who is down? cried Ivanhoe; 'for our dear Lady's sake, tell me which has fallen!'

'The Black Knight,' answered Rebecca, faintly; then, instantly again shouted with joyful eagerness — 'But no — but no! the name of the Lord of Hosts be blessed! he is on foot again, and fights as if there were twenty men's strength in his single arm. His sword is broken — he snatches an axe from a yeoman — he presses Front-de-Bœuf with blow on blow. The giant stoops and totters like an oak under the steel of the woodman — he falls — he falls!'

'Front-de-Bœuf!' exclaimed Ivanhoe.

'Front-de-Bœuf,' answered the Jewess. 'His men rush to the rescue, headed by the haughty Templar; their united force compels the champion to pause. They drag Front-de-Bœuf within the walls.'

'The assailants have won the barriers, have they not?' said Ivanhoe.

'They have — they have!' exclaimed Rebecca; 'and they press the besieged hard upon the outer wall; some plant ladders, some swarm like bees, and endeavour to ascend upon the shoulders of each other; down go stones, beams, and trunks of trees upon their heads, and as fast as they bear the wounded to the rear, fresh men supply their places in the assault. Great God! hast Thou given men Thine own image that it should be thus cruelly defaced by the hands of their brethren!'

'Think not of that,' said Ivanhoe; 'this is no time for such thoughts. Who yield? who push their way?'

'The ladders are thrown down,' replied Rebecca, shuddering; 'the soldiers lie grovelling under them like crushed reptiles. The besieged have the better.'

'St. George strike for us!' exclaimed the knight; 'do the false yeomen give way?'

'No!' exclaimed Rebecca, 'they bear themselves right yeomanly. The Black Knight approaches the postern with his huge axe; the thundering blows which he deals, you may hear them above all the din and shouts of the battle. Stones and beams are hailed down on the bold champion: he regards them no more than if they were thistle-down or feathers!'

'By St. John of Acre,' said Ivanhoe, raising himself joyfully on his couch, 'methought there was but one man in England that might do such a deed!'

'The postern gate shakes,' continued Rebecca — 'it crashes —

it is splintered by his blows — they rush in — the outwork is won. Oh God! they hurl the defenders from the battlements — they throw them into the moat. O men, if ye be indeed men, sparo them that can resist no longer!

'The bridge — the bridge which communicates with the castle — have they won that pass?' exclaimed Ivanhoe.

'No,' replied Rebecca; 'the Templar has destroyed the plank on which they crossed: few of the defenders escaped with him into the castle — the shrieks and cries which you hear tell the fate of the others. Alas! I see it is still more difficult to look upon victory than upon battle.'

'What do they now, maiden?' said Ivanhoe; 'look forth yet again — this is no time to faint at bloodshed.'

'It is over for the time,' answered Rebecca; 'our friends strengthen themselves within the outwork which they have mastered, and it affords them so good a shelter from the foemen's shot that the garrison only bestow a few bolts on it from interval to interval, as if rather to disquiet than effectually to injure them.'

'Our friends,' said Wilfred, 'will surely not abandon an enterprise so gloriously begun and so happily attained. O no! I will put my faith in the good knight whose axe hath rent heart-of-oak and bars of iron. Singular,' he again muttered to himself, 'if there be two who can do a deed of such derring-do.'¹ A fetterlock, and a shackle-bolt on a field sable — what may that mean? Seest thou nought else, Rebecca, by which the Black Knight may be distinguished?

'Nothing,' said the Jewess; 'all about him is black as the wing of the night raven. Nothing can I spy that can mark him further; but having once seen him: put forth his strength in battle, methinks I could know him again among a thousand warriors. He rushes to the fray as if he were summoned to a banquet. There is more than mere strength — there seems as if the whole soul and spirit of the champion were given to every blow which he deals upon his enemies. God assoilzie him of the sin of bloodshed! It is fearful, yet magnificent, to behold how the arm and heart of one man can triumph over hundreds.'

'Rebecca,' said Ivanhoe, 'thou hast painted a hero; surely they rest but to refresh their force, or to provide the means of crossing the moat. Under such a leader as thou hast spoken this knight to be, there are no craven fears, no cold-blooded delays, no yielding up a gallant emprise, since the difficulties

¹ *Derring-do* — desperate courage.

which render it arduous render it also glorious. I swear by the honour of my house — I vow by the name of my bright lady-love, I would endure ten years' captivity to fight one day by that good knight's side in such a quarrel as this !'

'Alas !' said Rebecca, leaving her station at the window, and approaching the couch of the wounded knight, 'this impatient yearning after action — this struggling with and repining at your present weakness, will not fail to injure your returning health. How couldst thou hope to inflict wounds on others, ere that be healed which thou thyself hast received ?'

'Rebecca,' he replied, 'thou knowest not how impossible it is for one trained to actions of chivalry to remain passive as a priest, or a woman, when they are acting deeds of honour around him. The love of battle is the food upon which we live — the dust of the *mêlée* is the breath of our nostrils ! We live not — we wish not to live — longer than while we are victorious and renowned. Such, maiden, are the laws of chivalry to which we are sworn, and to which we offer all that we hold dear.'

'Alas !' said the fair Jewess, 'and what is it, valiant knight, save an offering of sacrifice to a demon of vain glory, and a passing through the fire to Moloch ? What remains to you as the prize of all the blood you have spilled, of all the travail and pain you have endured, of all the tears which your deeds have caused, when death hath broken the strong man's spear, and overtaken the speed of his war-horse ?'

'What remains ?' cried Ivanhoe. 'Glory, maiden — glory ! which gilds our sepulchre and embalms our name.'

'Glory !' continued Rebecca ; 'alas ! is the rusted mail which hangs as a hatchment over the champion's dim and mouldering tomb, is the defaced sculpture of the inscription which the ignorant monk can hardly read to the inquiring pilgrim — are these sufficient rewards for the sacrifice of every kindly affection, for a life spent miserably that ye may make others miserable ? Or is there such virtue in the rude rhymes of a wandering bard, that domestic love, kindly affection, peace and happiness, are so wildly bartered, to become the hero of those ballads which vagabond minstrels sing to drunken churls over their evening ale ?'

'By the soul of Hereward !' replied the knight, impatiently, 'thou speakest, maiden, of thou knowest not what. Thou wouldst quench the pure light of chivalry, which alone distinguishes the noble from the base, the gentle knight from the churl and the savage ; which rates our life far, far beneath the

pitch of our honour, raises us victorious over pain, toil, and suffering, and teaches us to fear no evil but disgrace. Thou art no Christian, Rebecca ; and to thee are unknown those high feelings which swell the bosom of a noble maiden when her lover hath done some deed of emprise which sanctions his flame. Chivalry ! Why, maiden, she is the nurse of pure and high affection, the stay of the oppressed, the redresser of grievances, the curb of the power of the tyrant. Nobility were but an empty name without her, and liberty finds the best protection in her lance and her sword.'

'I am, indeed,' said Rebecca, 'sprung from a race whose courage was distinguished in the defence of their own land, but who warred not, even while yet a nation, save at the command of the Diety, or in defending their country from oppression. The sound of the trumpet wakes Judah no longer, and her despised children are now but the unresisting victims of hostile and military oppression. Well hast thou spoken, Sir Knight : until the God of Jacob shall raise up for His chosen people a second Gideon, or a new Maccabeus, it ill beseemeth the Jewish damsel to speak of battle or of war.'

The high-minded maiden concluded the argument in a tone of sorrow, which deeply expressed her sense of the degradation of her people, embittered perhaps by the idea that Ivanhoe considered her as one not entitled to interfere in a case of honour, and incapable of entertaining or expressing sentiments of honour and generosity.

'How little he knows this bosom,' she said, 'to imagine that cowardice or meanness of soul must needs be its guests, because I have censured the fantastic chivalry of the Nazarenes ! Would to Heaven that the shedding of mine own blood, drop by drop, could redeem the captivity of Judah ! Nay, would to God it could avail to set free my father, and this his benefactor, from the chains of the oppressor ! The proud Christian should then see whether the daughter of God's chosen people dared not to die as bravely as the vainest Nazarene maiden, that boasts her descent from some petty chieftain of the rude and frozen north !'

She then looked towards the couch of the wounded knight.

'He sleeps,' she said ; 'nature exhausted by sufferance and the waste of spirits, his wearied frame embraces the first moment of temporary relaxation to sink into slumber. Alas ! is it a crime that I should look upon him, when it may be for the last time ? When yet but a short space, and those fair features

will be no longer animated by the bold and buoyant spirit which forsakes them not even in sleep! When the nostril shall be distended, the mouth agape, the eyes fixed and bloodshot; and when the proud and noble knight may be trodden on by the lowest caitiff of this accursed castle, yet stir not when the heel is lifted up against him! And my father! — oh, my father! evil is it with his daughter, when his grey hairs are not remembered because of the golden locks of youth! What know I but that these evils are the messengers of Jehovah's wrath to the unnatural child who thinks of a stranger's captivity before a parent's? who forgets the desolation of Judah, and looks upon the comeliness of a Gentile and a stranger? But I will tear this folly from my heart, though every fibre bleed as I rend it away!

She wrapped herself closely in her veil, and sat down at a distance from the couch of the wounded knight, with her back turned towards it, fortifying, or endeavouring to fortify, her mind not only against the impending evils from without, but also against those treacherous feelings which assailed her from within.

CHAPTER XXX

Approach the chamber, look upon his bed,
His is the passing of no peaceful ghost,
Which, as the lark arises to the sky,
'Mid morning's sweetest breeze and softest dew,
Is wing'd to heaven by good men's sighs and tears !
Anselm parts otherwise.

Old Play.

DURING the interval of quiet which followed the first success of the besiegers, while the one party was preparing to pursue their advantage and the other to strengthen their means of defence, the Templar and De Bracy held brief counsel together in the hall of the castle.

'Where is Front-de Bœuf?' said the latter, who had superintended the defence of the fortress on the other side; 'men say he hath been slain.'

'He lives,' said the Templar, coolly — 'lives as yet; but had he worn the bull's head of which he bears the name, and ten plates of iron to fence it withal, he must have gone down before yonder fatal axe. Yet a few hours, and Front-de-Bœuf is with his fathers — a powerful limb lopped off Prince John's enterprise.'

'And a brave addition to the kingdom of Satan,' said De Bracy; 'this comes of reviling saints and angels, and ordering images of holy things and holy men to be flung down on the heads of these rascaille yeomen.'

'Go to, thou art a fool,' said the Templar; 'thy superstition is upon a level with Front-de-Bœuf's want of faith; neither of you can render a reason for your belief or unbelief.'

'*Benedicite*, Sir Templar,' replied De Bracy, 'I pray you to keep better rule with your tongue when I am the theme of it. By the Mother of Heaven, I am a better Christian man than thou and thy fellowship; for the bruit goeth shrewdly out, that the most holy order of the Temple of Zion nurseth not a few

heretics within its bosom, and that Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert is of the number.'

'Care not for such reports,' said the Templar; 'but let us think of making good the castle. How fought these villain yeomen on thy side?'

'Like fiends incarnate,' said De Bracy. 'They swarmed close up to the walls, headed, as I think, by the knave who won the prize at the archery, for I knew his horn and baldric. And this is old Fitzurse's boasted policy, encouraging these malapert knaves to rebel against us! Had I not been armed in proof, the villain had marked me down seven times with as little remorse as if I had been a buck in season. He told every rivet on my armour with a cloth-yard shaft, that rapped against my ribs with as little compunction as if my bones had been of iron. But that I wore a shirt of Spanish mail under my plate-coat, I had been fairly sped.'

'But you maintained your post?' said the Templar. 'We lost the outwork on our part.'

'That is a shrewd loss,' said De Bracy; 'the knaves will find cover there to assault the castle more closely, and may, if not well watched, gain some unguarded corner of a tower, or some forgotten window, and so break in upon us. Our numbers are too few for the defences of every point, and the men complain that they can nowhere show themselves, but they are the mark for as many arrows as a parish-butt on a holiday even. Front-de-Bœuf is dying too, so we shall receive no more aid from his bull's head and brutal strength. How think you, Sir Brian, were we not better make a virtue of necessity, and compound with the rogues by delivering up our prisoners?'

'How!' exclaimed the Templar; 'deliver up our prisoners, and stand an object alike of ridicule and execration, as the doughty warriors who dared by a night-attack to possess themselves of the persons of a party of defenceless travellers, yet could not make good a strong castle against a vagabond troop of outlaws, led by swineherds, jesters, and the very refuse of mankind? Shame on thy counsel, Maurice de Bracy! The ruins of this castle shall bury both my body and my shame, ere I consent to such base and dishonourable composition.'

'Let us to the walls, then,' said De Bracy, carelessly; 'that man never breathed, be he Turk or Templar, who held life at a lighter rate than I do. But I trust there is no dishonour in wishing I had here some two scores of my gallant troop of Free Companions? Oh, my brave lances! if ye knew but how hard

your captain were this day bested, how soon would I see my banner at the head of your clump of spears! And how short while would these rabble villains stand to endure your encounter!

'Wish for whom thou wilt,' said the Templar, 'but let us make what defence we can with the soldiers who remain. They are chiefly Front-de-Bœuf's followers, hated by the English for a thousand acts of insolence and oppression.'

'The better,' said De Bracy; 'the rugged slaves will defend themselves to the last drop of their blood, ere they encounter the revenge of the peasants without. Let us up and be doing, then, Brian de Bois-Guilbert; and, live or die, thou shalt see Maurice de Bracy bear himself this day as a gentleman of blood and lineage.'

'To the walls!' answered the Templar; and they both ascended the battlements to do all that skill could dictate, and manhood accomplish, in defence of the place. They readily agreed that the point of greatest danger was that opposite to the outwork of which the assailants had possessed themselves. The castle, indeed, was divided from that barbican by the moat, and it was impossible that the besiegers could assail the postern door, with which the outwork corresponded, without surmounting that obstacle; but it was the opinion both of the Templar and De Bracy that the besiegers, if governed by the same policy their leader had already displayed, would endeavour, by a formidable assault, to draw the chief part of the defenders' observation to this point, and take measures to avail themselves of every negligence which might take place in the defence elsewhere. To guard against such an evil, their numbers only permitted the knights to place sentinels from space to space along the walls in communication with each other, who might give the alarm whenever danger was threatened. Meanwhile, they agreed that De Bracy should command the defence at the postern, and the Templar should keep with him a score of men or thereabouts as a body of reserve, ready to hasten to any other point which might be suddenly threatened. The loss of the barbican had also this unfortunate effect, that, notwithstanding the superior heights of the castle walls, the besieged could not see from them, with the same precision as before, the operations of the enemy; for some straggling underwood approached so near the sallyport of the outwork that the assailants might introduce into it whatever force they thought proper, not only under cover, but even without the knowledge

of the defenders. Utterly uncertain, therefore, upon what point the storm was to burst, De Bracy and his companion were under the necessity of providing against every possible contingency, and their followers, however brave, experienced the anxious dejection of mind incident to men inclosed by enemies, who possessed the power of choosing their time and mode of attack.

Meanwhile, the lord of the beleaguered and endangered castle lay upon a bed of bodily pain and mental agony. He had not the usual resource of bigots in that superstitious period, most of whom were wont to atone for the crimes they were guilty of by liberality to the church, stupifying by this means their terrors by the idea of atonement and forgiveness; and although the refuge which success thus purchased was no more like to the peace of mind which follows on sincere repentance than the turbid stupefaction procured by opium resembles healthy and natural slumbers, it was still a state of mind preferable to the agonies of awakened remorse. But among the vices of Front-de-Bœuf, a hard and griping man, avarice was predominant; and he preferred setting church and churchmen at defiance to purchasing from them pardon and absolution at the price of treasure and of manors. Nor did the Templar, an infidel of another stamp, justly characterise his associate when he said Front-de-Bœuf could assign no cause for his unbelief and contempt for the established faith; for the baron would have alleged that the church sold her wares too dear, that the spiritual freedom which she put up to sale was only to be bought, like that of the chief captain of Jerusalem, 'with a great sum,' and Front-de-Bœuf preferred denying the virtue of the medicine to paying the expense of the physician.

But the moment had now arrived when earth and all its treasures were gliding from before his eyes, and when the savage baron's heart, though hard as a nether millstone, became appalled as he gazed forward into the waste darkness of futurity. The fever of his body aided the impatience and agony of his mind, and his death-bed exhibited a mixture of the newly-awakened feeling of horror combating with the fixed and inveterate obstinacy of his disposition—a fearful state of mind, only to be equalled in those tremendous regions where there are complaints without hope, remorse without repentance, a dreadful sense of present agony, and a presentiment that it cannot cease or be diminished!

'Where be these dog-priests now,' growled the baron, 'who set such price on their ghostly mummeries? — where be all those unshod Carmelites, for whom old Front-de-Bœuf founded the convent of St. Anne, robbing his heir of many a fair rood of meadow, and many a fat field and close — where be the greedy hounds now? Swilling, I warrant me, at the ale, or playing their juggling tricks at the bedside of some miserly churl. Me, the heir of their founder — me, whom their foundation binds them to pray for — me — ungrateful villains as they are! — they suffer to die like the houseless dog on yonder common, unshriven and unhoused! Tell the Templar to come hither; he is a priest, and may do something. But no! as well confess myself to the devil as to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, who reckes neither of Heaven nor of Hell. I have heard old men talk of prayer — prayer by their own voice — such need not to court or to bribe the false priest. But I — I dare not!'

'Lives Reginald Front-de-Bœuf,' said a broken and shrill voice close by his bedside, 'to say there is that which he dares not!'

The evil conscience and the shaken nerves of Front-de-Bœuf heard, in this strange interruption to his soliloquy, the voice of one of those demons who, as the superstition of the times believed, beset the beds of dying men, to distract their thoughts, and turn them from the meditations which concerned their eternal welfare. He shuddered and drew himself together; but, instantly summoning up his wonted resolution, he exclaimed, 'Who is there? what art thou, that dardest to echo my words in a tone like that of the night-raven? Come before my couch that I may see thee.'

'I am thine evil angel, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf,' replied the voice.

'Let me behold thee then in thy bodily shape, if thou be'st indeed a fiend,' replied the dying knight; 'think not that I will blench from thee. By the eternal dungeon, could I but grapple with these horrors that hover round me as I have done with mortal dangers, Heaven or Hell should never say that I shrunk from the conflict!'

'Think on thy sins, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf,' said the almost unearthly voice — 'on rebellion, on rapine, on murder! Who stirred up the licentious John to war against his grey-headed father — against his generous brother?'

'Be thou fiend, priest, or devil,' replied Front-de-Bœuf, 'thou liest in thy throat! Not I stirred John to rebellion — not I

alone; there were fifty knights and barons, the flower of the midland counties, better men never laid lance in rest. And must I answer for the fault done by fifty? False fiend, I defy thee! Depart, and haunt my couch no more. Let me die in peace if thou be mortal; if thou be a demon, thy time is not yet come.'

'In peace thou shalt not die,' repeated the voice; 'even in death shalt thou think on thy murders — on the groans which this castle has echoed — on the blood that is engrained in its floors!'

'Thou canst not shake me by thy petty malice,' answered Front-de-Bœuf, with a ghastly and constrained laugh. 'The infidel Jew — it was merit with Heaven to deal with him as I did, else wherefore are men canonised who dip their hands in the blood of Saracens? The Saxon porkers whom I have slain — they were the foes of my country, and of my lineage, and of my liege lord. Ho! ho! thou seest there is no crevice in my coat of plate. Art thou fled? art thou silenced?'

'No, foul parricide!' replied the voice; 'think of thy father: — think of his death! — think of his banquet-room flooded with his gore, and that poured forth by the hand of a son!'

'Ha!' answered the Baron, after a long pause, 'an thou knowest that, thou art indeed the Author of Evil, and as omniscient as the monks call thee! That secret I deemed locked in my own breast, and in that of one besides — the temptress, the partaker of my guilt. Go, leave me, fiend! and seek the Saxon witch Ulrica, who alone could tell thee what she and I alone witnessed. Go, I say, to her, who washed the wounds, and straightened the corpse, and gave to the slain man the outward show of one parted in time and in the course of nature. Go to her; she was my temptress, the foul provoker, the more foul rewarder, of the deed; let her, as well as I, taste of the tortures which anticipate Hell!'

'She already tastes them,' said Ulrica, stepping before the couch of Front-de-Bœuf; 'she hath long drunken of this cup, and its bitterness is now sweetened to see that thou dost partake it. Grind not thy teeth, Front-de-Bœuf — roll not thine eyes — clench not thy hand, nor shake it at me with that gesture of menace! The hand which, like that of thy renowned ancestor who gained thy name, could have broken with one stroke the skull of a mountain-bull, is now unnerved and powerless as mine own!'

'Vile, murderous hag!' replied Front-de-Bœuf — 'detestable screech-owl! it is then thou who art come to exult over the ruins thou hast assisted to lay low?'

'Ay, Reginald Front-de-Bœuf,' answered she, 'it is Ulrica! — it is the daughter of the murdered Torquil Wolfganger! — it is the sister of his slaughtered sons! it is she who demands of thee, and of thy father's house, father and kindred, name and fame — all that she has lost by the name of Front-de-Bœuf! Think of my wrongs, Front-de-Bœuf, and answer me if I speak not truth. Thou hast been my evil angel, and I will be thine: I will dog thee till the very instant of dissolution!'

'Detestable fury!' exclaimed Front-de-Bœuf, 'that moment shalt thou never witness. Ho! Giles, Clement, and Eustace! St. Maur and Stephen! seize this damned witch, and hurl her from the battlements headlong; she has betrayed us to the Saxon! Ho! St. Maur! Clement! false-hearted knaves, where tarry ye!'

'Call on them again, valiant baron,' said the hag, with a smile of grisly mockery; 'summon thy vassals around thee, doom them that loiter to the scourge and the dungeon. But know, mighty chief,' she continued, suddenly changing her tone, 'thou shalt have neither answer, nor aid, nor obedience at their hands. Listen to these horrid sounds,' for the din of the recommenced assault and defence now rung fearfully loud from the battlements of the castle; 'in that war-cry is the downfall of thy house. The blood-cemented fabric of Front-de-Bœuf's power totters to the foundation, and before the foes he most despised! The Saxon, Reginald! — the scorned Saxon assails thy walls! Why liest thou here, like a worn-out Lind, when the Saxon storms thy place of strength?'

'Gods and fiends!' exclaimed the wounded knight. 'O, for one moment's strength, to drag myself to the *mêlée*, and perish as becomes my name!'

'Think not of it, valiant warrior!' replied she; 'thou shalt die no soldier's death, but perish like the fox in his den, when the peasants have set fire to the cover around it.'

'Hateful hag! thou liest!' exclaimed Front-de-Bœuf; 'my followers bear them bravely — my walls are strong and high my comrades in arms fear not a whole host of Saxons, were they headed by Hengist and Horsa! The war-cry of the Templar and of the Free Companions rises high over the conflict! And by mine honour, when we kindle the blazing beacon for joy of our defence, it shall consume thee, body and

bones ; and I shall live to hear thou art gone from earthly fires to those of that Hell which never sent forth an incarnate fiend so utterly diabolical !

'Hold thy belief,' replied Ulrica, 'till the proof reach thee. But no !' she said, interrupting herself, 'thou shalt know even now the doom which all thy power, strength, and courage is unable to avoid, though it is prepared for thee by this feeble hand. Markest thou the smouldering and suffocating vapour which already eddies in sable folds through the chamber ? Didst thou think it was but the darkening of thy bursting eyes, the difficulty of thy cumbered breathing ? No ! Front-de-Bœuf, there is another cause. Rememberest thou the magazine of fuel that is stored beneath these apartments ?

'Woman !' he exclaimed with fury, 'thou hast not set fire to it ? By Heaven, thou hast, and the castle is in flames !'

'They are fast rising at least,' said Ulrica, with frightful composure ; 'and a signal shall soon wave to warn the besiegers to press hard upon those who would extinguish them. Farewell, Front-de-Bœuf ! May Mista, Skogula, and Zernebock, gods of the ancient Saxons — fiends, as the priests now call them — supply the place of comforters at your dying bed, which Ulrica now relinquishes ! But know, if it will give thee comfort to know it, that Ulrica is bound to the same dark coast with thyself, the companion of thy punishment as the companion of thy guilt. And now, parricide, farewell for ever ! May each stone of this vaulted roof find a tongue to echo that title into thine ear !'

So saying, she left the apartment ; and Front-de-Bœuf could hear the crash of the ponderous key as she locked and double-locked the door behind her, thus cutting off the most slender chance of escape. In the extremity of agony, he shouted upon his servants and allies — 'Stephen and St. Maur ! Clement and Giles ! I burn here unaided ! To the rescue — to the rescue, brave Bois-Guilbert, valiant De Bracy ! It is Front-de-Bœuf who calls ! It is your master, ye traitor squires ! Your ally — your brother in arms, ye perjured and faithless knights ! All the curses due to traitors upon your recreant heads, do you abandon me to perish thus miserably ! They hear me not — they cannot hear me — my voice is lost in the din of battle. The smoke rolls thicker and thicker, the fire has caught upon the floor below. O, for one draught of the air of heaven, were it to be purchased by instant annihilation !' And in the mad frenzy of despair, the wretch now shouted with the shouts of

the fighters, now muttered curses on himself, on mankind, and on Heaven itself. 'The red fire flashes through the thick smoke!' he exclaimed; 'the demon marches against me under the banner of his own element. Foul spirit, avoid! I go not with thee without my comrades — all, all are thine that garrison these walls. Thinkest thou Front-de-Bœuf will be singled out to go alone? No; the infidel Templar, the licentious De Bracy, Ulrica, the foul murdering strumpet, the men who aided my enterprises, the dog Saxons and accursed Jews who are my prisoners — all, all shall attend me — a goodly fellowship as ever took the downward road. Ha, ha, ha!' and he laughed in his frenzy till the vaulted roof rang again. 'Who laughed there?' exclaimed Front-de-Bœuf, in altered mood, for the noise of the conflict did not prevent the echoes of his own mad laughter from returning upon his ear — 'who laughed there? Ulrica, was it thou? Speak, witch, and I forgive thee; for only thou or the Fiend of Hell himself could have laughed at such a moment. Avaunt — avaunt ——!'

But it were impious to trace any farther the picture of the blasphemer and parricide's death-bed.

CHAPTER XXXI

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead.

And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture — let us swear
That you are worth your breeding.

King Henry V.

CEDRIC, although not greatly confident in Ulrica's message, omitted not to communicate her promise to the Black Knight and Locksley. They were well pleased to find they had a friend within the place, who might, in the moment of need, be able to facilitate their entrance, and readily agreed with the Saxon that a storm, under whatever disadvantages, ought to be attempted, as the only means of liberating the prisoners now in the hands of the cruel Front-de-Bœuf.

'The royal blood of Alfred is endangered,' said Cedric.

'The honour of a noble lady is in peril,' said the Black Knight.

'And, by the St. Christopher at my baldric,' said the good yeoman, 'were there no other cause than the safety of that poor faithful knave, Wamba, I would jeopard a joint ere a hair of his head were hurt.'

'And so would I,' said the Friar; 'what, sirs! I trust well that a fool — I mean, d'ye see me, sirs, a fool that is free of his guild and master of his craft, and can give as much relish and flavour to a cup of wine as ever a fitch of bacon can — I say, brethren, such a fool shall never want a wise clerk to pray for or fight for him at a strait, while I can say a mass or flourish a partizan.'

And with that he made his heavy halberd to play around his head as a shepherd boy flourishes his little crook.

'True, holy clerk,' said the Black Knight — 'true as if St. Dunstan himself had said it. And now, good Locksley, were

it not well that noble Cedric should assume the direction of this assault ?'

'Not a jot I,' returned Cedric; 'I have never been wont to study either how to take or how to hold out those abodes of tyrannic power which the Normans have erected in this groaning land. I will fight among the foremost; but my honest neighbours well know I am not a trained soldier in the discipline of wars or the attack of strongholds.'

'Since it stands thus with noble Cedric,' said Locksley, 'I am most willing to take on me the direction of the archery; and ye shall hang me up on my own trysting-tree an the defenders be permitted to show themselves over the walls without being stuck with as many shafts as there are cloves in a gammon of bacon at Christmas.'

'Well said, stout yeoman,' answered the Black Knight; 'and if I be thought worthy to have a charge in these matters, and can find among these brave men so many as are willing to follow a true English knight, for so I may surely call myself, I am ready, with such skill as my experience has taught me, to lead them to the attack of these walls.'

The parts being thus distributed to the leaders, they commenced the first assault, of which the reader has already heard the issue.

When the barbican was carried, the Sable Knight sent notice of the happy event to Locksley, requesting him at the same time to keep such a strict observation on the castle as might prevent the defenders from combining their force for a sudden sally, and recovering the outwork which they had lost. This the knight was chiefly desirous of avoiding, conscious that the men whom he led, being hasty and untrained volunteers, imperfectly armed and unaccustomed to discipline, must, upon any sudden attack, fight at great disadvantage with the veteran soldiers of the Norman knights, who were well provided with arms both defensive and offensive; and who, to match the zeal and high spirit of the besiegers, had all the confidence which arises from perfect discipline and the habitual use of weapons.

The knight employed the interval in causing to be constructed a sort of floating bridge, or long raft, by means of which he hoped to cross the moat in despite of the resistance of the enemy. This was a work of some time, which the leaders the less regretted, as it gave Ulrica leisure to execute her plan of diversion in their favour, whatever that might be.

When the raft was completed, the Black Knight addressed

the besiegers : ' It avails not waiting here longer, my friends ; the sun is descending to the west, and I have that upon my hands which will not permit me to tarry with you another day. Besides, it will be a marvel if the horsemen come not upon us from York, unless we speedily accomplish our purpose. Wherefore, one of ye go to Locksley, and bid him commence a discharge of arrows on the opposite side of the castle, and move forward as if about to assault it ; and you, true English hearts, stand by me, and be ready to thrust the raft endlong over the moat whenever the posteru on our side is thrown open. Follow me boldly across, and aid me to burst yon sallyport in the main wall of the castle. As many of you as like not this service, or are but ill armed to meet it, do you man the top of the outwork, draw your bowstrings to your ears, and mind you quell with your shot whatever shall appear to man the rampart. Noble Cedric, wilt thou take the direction of those which remain ? '

' Not so, by the soul of Hereward ! ' said the Saxon ; ' lead I cannot ; but may posterity curse me in my grave, if I follow not with the foremost wherever thou shalt point the way. The quarrel is mine, and well it becomes me to be in the van of the battle. '

' Yet, bethink thee, noble Saxon, ' said the knight, ' thou hast neither hauberk, nor corslet, nor aught but that light helmet, target, and sword. '

' The better ! ' answered Cedric ; ' I shall be the lighter to climb these walls. And — forgive the boast, Sir Knight — thou shalt this day see the naked breast of a Saxon as boldly presented to the battle as ever ye beheld the steel corslet of a Norman. '

' In the name of God, then, ' said the knight, ' fling open the door, and launch the floating bridge. '

The portal, which led from the inner wall of the barbican to the moat, and which corresponded with a sallyport in the main wall of the castle, was now suddenly opened ; the temporary bridge was then thrust forward, and soon flashed in the waters, extending its length between the castle and outwork, and forming a slippery and precarious passage for two men abreast to cross the moat. Well aware of the importance of taking the foe by surprise, the Black Knight, closely followed by Cedric, threw himself upon the bridge, and reached the opposite side. Here he began to thunder with his axe upon the gate of the castle, protected in part from the shot and stones cast by the

defenders by the ruins of the former drawbridge, which the Templar had demolished in his retreat from the barbican, leaving the counterpoise still attached to the upper part of the portal. The followers of the knight had no such shelter; two were instantly shot with cross-bow bolts, and two more fell into the moat; the others retreated back into the barbican.

The situation of Cedric and of the Black Knight was now truly dangerous, and would have been still more so but for the constancy of the archers in the barbican, who ceased not to shower their arrows upon the battlements, distracting the attention of those by whom they were manned, and thus affording a respite to their two chiefs from the storm of missiles which must otherwise have overwhelmed them. But their situation was eminently perilous, and was becoming more so with every moment.

'Shame on ye all!' cried De Bracy to the soldiers around him; 'do ye call yourselves cross-bowmen, and let these two dogs keep their station under the walls of the castle? Heave over the coping stones from the battlement, an better may not be. Get pickaxe and levers, and down with that huge pinnacle!' pointing to a heavy piece of stone carved-work that projected from the parapet.

At this moment the besiegers caught sight of the red flag upon the angle of the tower which Ulrica had described to Cedric. The good yeoman Locksley was the first who was aware of it, as he was hasting to the outwork, impatient to see the progress of the assault.

'St. George!' he cried — 'Merry St. George for England! To the charge, bold yeomen! why leave ye the good knight and noble Cedric to storm the pass alone? Make in, mad priest, show thou canst fight for thy rosary — make in, brave yeomen! — the castle is ours, we have friends within. See yonder flag, it is the appointed signal — Torquilstone is ours! Think of honour — think of spoil! One effort, and the place is ours!'

With that he bent his good bow, and sent a shaft right through the breast of one of the men-at-arms, who, under De Bracy's direction, was loosening a fragment from one of the battlements to precipitate on the heads of Cedric and the Black Knight. A second soldier caught from the hands of the dying man the iron crow with which he heaved at and had loosened the stone pinnacle, when, receiving an arrow through his head-piece, he dropped from the battlements into the moat a dead

man. The men-at-arms were daunted, for no armour seemed proof against the shot of this tremendous archer.

'Do you give ground, base knaves!' said De Bracy; '*Mount joye Saint Denis!* Give me the lever!'

And, snatching it up, he again assailed the loosened pinnacle, which was of weight enough, if thrown down, not only to have destroyed the remnant of the drawbridge which sheltered the two foremost assailants, but also to have sunk the rude float of planks over which they had crossed. All saw the danger, and the boldest, even the stout Friar himself, avoided setting foot on the raft. Thrice did Locksley bend his shaft against De Bracy, and thrice did his arrow bound back from the knight's armour of proof.

'Curse on thy Spanish steel-coat!' said Locksley, 'had English smith forged it, these arrows had gone through, and as if it had been silk or sendal.' He then began to call out, 'Comrades! friends! noble Cedric! bear back and let the ruin fall.'

His warning voice was unheard, for the din which the knight himself occasioned by his strokes upon the postern would have drowned twenty war-trumpets. The faithful Gurth indeed sprang forward on the planked bridge, to warn Cedric of his impending fate, or to share it with him. But his warning would have come too late; the massive pinnacle already tottered, and De Bracy, who still heaved at his task, would have accomplished it, had not the voice of the Templar sounded close in his ear:

'All is lost De Bracy; the castle burns.'

'Thou art to say so!' replied the knight.

'It is all over with flame on the western side. I have striven in vain to extinguish it.'

With the stern coolness which formed the basis of his character, Brian de Bois-Guilbert communicated this hideous intelligence, which was not so calmly received by his astonished comrade.

'Saints of Paradise!' said De Bracy; 'what is to be done? I vow to St. Nicholas of Limoges a candlestick of pure gold——'

'Spare thy vow,' said the Templar, 'and mark me. Lead thy men down as if to a sally; throw the postern gate open. There are but two men who occupy the float, fling them into the moat, and push across to the barbican. I will charge from the main gate, and attack the barbican on the outside; and if

we can regain that post, be assured we shall defend ourselves until we are relieved, or at least till they grant us fair quarter.'

'It is well thought upon,' said De Bracy; 'I will play my part. Templar, thou wilt not fail me!'

'Hand and glove, I will not!' said Bois-Guilbert. 'But haste thee, in the name of God!'

De Bracy hastily drew his men together, and rushed down to the postern gate, which he caused instantly to be thrown open. But scarce was this done ere the portentous strength of the Black Knight forced his way inward in despite of De Bracy and his followers. Two of the foremost instantly fell, and the rest gave way notwithstanding all their leader's efforts to stop them.

'Dogs!' said De Bracy, 'will ye let *two* men win only pass for safety?'

'He is the devil!' said a veteran man-at-arms, bearing back from the blows of their sable antagonist.

'And if he be the devil,' replied De Bracy, 'would you fly from him into the mouth of hell? The castle burns behind us, villains!—let despair give you courage, or let me forward! I will cope with this champion myself.'

And well and chivalrous did De Bracy that day maintain the fame he had acquired in the civil wars of that dreadful period. The vaulted passages to which the postern gave entrance, and in which these two redoubted champions were now fighting hand to hand, rung with the furious blows which they dealt each other, De Bracy with his sword, the Black Knight with his ponderous axe. At length the Norman received a blow which, though its force was partly parried by his shield, for otherwise never more would De Bracy have again moved limb, descended yet with such violence on his crest that he measured his length on the paved floor.

'Yield thee, De Bracy,' said the Black Champion, stooping over him, and holding against the bars of his helmet the fatal poniard with which the knights despatched their enemies, and which was called the dagger of mercy—'yield thee, Maurice de Bracy, rescue or no rescue, or thou art but a dead man.'

'I will not yield,' replied De Bracy, faintly, 'to an unknown conqueror. Tell me thy name, or work thy pleasure on me; it shall never be said that Maurice de Bracy was prisoner to a nameless churl.'

The Black Knight whispered something into the ear of the vanquished.

'I yield me to be true prisoner, rescue or no rescue,' an-



THE CONTEST AT THE BARRIERS.



answered the Norman, exchanging his tone of stern and determined obstinacy for one of deep though sullen submission.

'Go to the barbican,' said the victor, in a tone of authority, 'and there wait my further orders.'

'Yet first let me say,' said De Bracy, 'what it imports thee to know. Wilfred of Ivanhoe is wounded and a prisoner, and will perish in the burning castle without present help.'

'Wilfred of Ivanhoe!' exclaimed the Black Knight — 'prisoner, and perish! The life of every man in the castle shall answer it if a hair of his head be singed. Show me his chamber!'

'Ascend yonder winding stair,' said De Bracy; 'it leads to his apartment. Wilt thou accept my guidance?' he added, in a submissive tone.

'No. To the barbican, and there wait my orders. I trust thee not, De Bracy.'

During this combat and the brief conversation which ensued, Cedric, at the head of a body of men, among whom the Friar was conspicuous, had pushed across the bridge as soon as they saw the postern open, and drove back the dispirited and despairing followers of De Bracy, of whom some asked quarter, some offered vain resistance, and the greater part fled towards the courtyard. De Bracy himself arose from the ground, and cast a sorrowful glance after his conqueror. 'He trusts me not!' he repeated; 'but have I deserved his trust?' He then lifted his sword from the floor, took off his helmet in token of submission, and, going to the barbican, gave up his sword to Loc'sley, whom he met by the way.

As the fire augmented, symptoms of it became soon apparent in the chamber where Ivanhoe was watched and tended by the Jewess Rebecca. He had been awakened from his brief slumber by the noise of the battle; and his attendant, who had, at his anxious desire, again placed herself at the window to watch and report to him the fate of the attack, was for some time prevented from observing either by the increase of the smouldering and stifling vapour. At length the volumes of smoke which rolled into the apartment, the cries for water, which were heard even above the din of the battle, made them sensible of the progress of this new danger.

'The castle burns,' said Rebecca — 'it burns! What can we do to save ourselves?'

'Fly, Rebecca, and save thine own life,' said Ivanhoe, 'for no human aid can avail me.'

'I will not fly,' answered Rebecca; 'we will be saved or perish together. And yet, great God! my father — my father, what will be his fate?'

At this moment the door of the apartment flew open, and the Templar presented himself — a ghastly figure, for his gilded armour was broken and bloody, and the plume was partly shorn away, partly burnt from his casque. 'I have found thee,' said he to Rebecca; 'thou shalt prove I will keep my word to share weal and woe with thee. There is but one path to safety: I have cut my way through fifty dangers to point it to thee; up, and instantly follow me!'

'Alone,' answered Rebecca, 'I will not follow thee. If thou wert born of woman — if thou hast but a touch of human charity in thee — if thy heart be not as hard as thy breastplate — save my aged father — save this wounded knight!'

'A knight,' answered the Templar, with his characteristic calmness — 'a knight, Rebecca, must encounter his fate, whether it meet him in the shape of sword or flame; and who recks how or where a Jew meets with his?'

'Savage warrior,' said Rebecca, 'rather will I perish in the flames than accept safety from thee!'

'Thou shalt not choose, Rebecca; once didst thou foil me, but never mortal did so twice.'

So saying, he seized on the terrified maiden, who filled the air with her shrieks, and bore her out of the room in his arms, in spite of her cries, and without regarding the menaces and defiance which Ivanhoe thundered against him. 'Hound of the Temple — stain to thine order — set free the damsel! Traitor of Bois-Guilbert, it is Ivanhoe commands thee! Villain, I will have thy heart's blood!'

'I had not found thee, Wilfred,' said the Black Knight, who at that instant entered the apartment, 'but for thy shouts.'

'If thou be'st true knight,' said Wilfred, 'think not of me — pursue yon ravisher — save the Lady Rowena — look to the noble Cedric!'

'In their turn,' answered he of the Fetterlock, 'but thine is first.'

And seizing upon Ivanhoe, he bore him off with as much ease as the Templar had carried off Rebecca, rushed with him to the postern, and having there delivered his burden to the care of two yeomen, he again entered the castle to assist in the rescue of the other prisoners.

¹ See Incident from *Grand Cyrus*. Note 18.

One turret was now in bright flames, which flashed out furiously from window and shot-hole. But in other parts the great thickness of the walls and the vaulted roofs of the apartments resisted the progress of the flames, and there the rage of man still triumphed, as the scarce more dreadful element held mastery elsewhere; for the besiegers pursued the defenders of the castle from chamber to chamber, and satiated in their blood the vengeance which had long animated them against the soldiers of the tyrant Front-de-Bœuf. Most of the garrison resisted to the uttermost; few of them asked quarter; none received it. The air was filled with groans and clashing of arms; the floors were slippery with the blood of despairing and expiring wretches.

Through this scene of confusion, Cedric rushed in quest of Rowena, while the faithful Gurth, following him closely through the *mêlée*, neglected his own safety while he strove to avert the blows that were aimed at his master. The noble Saxon was so fortunate as to reach his ward's apartment just as she had abandoned all hopes of safety, and, with a crucifix clasped in agony to her bosom, sat in expectation of instant death. He committed her to the charge of Gurth, to be conducted in safety to the barbican, the road to which was now cleared of the enemy, and not yet interrupted by the flames. This accomplished, the loyal Cedric hastened in quest of his friend Athelstane, determined, at every risk to himself, to save that last scion of Saxon royalty. But ere Cedric penetrated as far as the old hall in which he had himself been a prisoner, the inventive genius of Wamba had procured liberation for himself and his companion in adversity.

When the noise of the conflict announced that it was at the hottest, the Jester began to shout, with the utmost power of his lungs, 'St. George and the dragon! Bonny St. George for merry England! The castle is won!' And these sounds he rendered yet more fearful by banging against each other two or three pieces of rusty armour which lay scattered around the hall.

A guard, which had been stationed in the outer or ante-room, and whose spirits were already in a state of alarm, took fright at Wamba's clamour, and, leaving the door open behind them, ran to tell the Templar that foemen had entered the old hall. Meantime the prisoners found no difficulty in making their escape into the ante-room, and from thence into the court of the castle, which was now the last scene of contest. Here

sat the fierce Templar, mounted on horseback, surrounded by several of the garrison both on horse and foot, who had united their strength to that of this renowned leader, in order to secure the last chance of safety and retreat which remained to them. The drawbridge had been lowered by his orders, but the passage was beset; for the archers, who had hitherto only annoyed the castle on that side by their missiles, no sooner saw the flames breaking out, and the bridge lowered, than they thronged to the entrance, as well to prevent the escape of the garrison as to secure their own share of booty ere the castle should be burnt down. On the other hand, a party of the besiegers, who had entered by the postern, were now issuing out into the courtyard, and attacking with fury the remnant of the defenders, who were thus assaulted on both sides at once.

Animated, however, by despair, and supported by the example of their indomitable leader, the remaining soldiers of the castle fought with the utmost valour; and, being well armed, succeeded more than once in driving back the assailants, though much inferior in numbers. Rebecca, placed on horseback before one of the Templar's Saracen slaves, was in the midst of the little party; and Bois-Guilbert, notwithstanding the confusion of the bloody fray, showed every attention to her safety. Repeatedly he was by her side, and, neglecting his own defence, held before her the fence of his triangular steel-plated shield; and again starting from his position by her, he cried his war-cry, dashed forward, struck to earth the most forward of the assailants, and was on the same instant once more at her bridle rein.

Athelstane, who, as the reader knows, was slothful, but not cowardly, beheld the female form whom the Templar protected thus sedulously, and doubted not that it was Rowena whom the knight was carrying off, in despite of all resistance which could be offered.

'By the soul of St. Edward,' he said, 'I will rescue her from yonder over-proud knight, and he shall die by my hand!'

'Think what you do!' cried Wamba; 'the hasty hand catches frog for fish; by my bauble, yonder is none of my Lady Rowena, see but her long dark locks! Nay, an ye will not know black from white, ye may be leader, but I will be no follower; no bones of mine shall be broken unless I know for whom. And you without armour too! Bethink you, silk

bonnet never kept out steel blade. Nay, then, if wilful will to water, wilful must drench. *Deus vobiscum*, most doughty Athelstane!' he concluded, loosening the hold which he had hitherto kept upon the Saxon's tunic.

To snatch a mace from the pavement, on which it lay beside one whose dying grasp had just relinquished it, to rush on the Templar's band, and to strike in quick succession to the right and left, levelling a warrior at each blow, was, for Athelstane's great strength, now animated with unusual fury, but the work of a single moment; he was soon within two yards of Bois-Guilbert, whom he defied in his loudest tone.

'Turn, false-hearted Templar! let go her whom thou art unworthy to touch; turn, limb of a band of murdering and hypocritical robbers!'

'Dog!' said the Templar, grinding his teeth, 'I will teach thee to blaspheme the holy order of the Temple of Zion'; and with these words, half-wheeling his steed, he made a demi-courbette towards the Saxon, and rising in the stirrups, so as to take full advantage of the descent of the horse, he discharged a fearful blow upon the head of Athelstane.

Well said Wamba, that silken bonnet keeps out no steel blade! So trenchant was the Templar's weapon, that it shored asunder, as it had been a willow twig, the tough and plaited handle of the mace, which the ill-fated Saxon reared to parry the blow, and, descending on his head, levelled him with the earth.

'*Ha! Beau-seant!*' exclaimed Bois-Guilbert, 'thus be it to the maligners of the Temple knights!' Taking advantage of the dismay which was spread by the fall of Athelstane, and calling aloud, 'Those who would save themselves, follow me!' he pushed across the drawbridge, dispersing the archers who would have intercepted them. He was followed by his Saracens, and some five or six men-at-arms, who had mounted their horses. The Templar's retreat was rendered perilous by the numbers of arrows shot off at him and his party: but this did not prevent him from galloping round to the barbican, of which, according to his previous plan, he supposed it possible De Bracy might have been in possession.

'De Bracy! De Bracy!' he shouted, 'art thou there?'

'I am here,' replied De Bracy, 'but I am a prisoner.'

'Can I rescue thee?' cried Bois-Guilbert.

'No,' replied De Bracy; 'I have rendered me, rescue or no rescue. I will be true prisoner. Save thyself; there are hawks

abroad. Put the seas betwixt you and England ; I dare not say more.

'Well,' answered the Templar, 'an thou wilt tarry there, remember I have redeemed word and glove. Be the hawks where they will, methinks the walls of the preceptory of Templestowe will be cover sufficient, and thither will I, like heron to her haunt.'

Having thus spoken, he galloped off with his followers.

Those of the castle who had not gotten to horse, still continued to fight desperately with the besiegers, after the departure of the Templar, but rather in despair of quarter than that they entertained any hope of escape. The fire was spreading rapidly through all parts of the castle, when Ulrica, who had first kindled it, appeared on a turret, in the guise of one of the ancient furies, yelling forth a war-song, such as was of yore raised on the field of battle by the scalds of the yet heathen Saxons. Her long dishevelled grey hair flew back from her uncovered head ; the inebriating delight of gratified vengeance contended in her eyes with the fire of insanity ; and she brandished the distaff which she held in her hand, as if she had been one of the Fatal Sisters who spin and abridge the thread of human life. Tradition has preserved some wild strophes of the barbarous hymn which she chanted wildly amid that scene of fire and of slaughter : —

Whet the bright steel,
Sons of the White Dragon !
Kindle the torch,
Daughter of Hengist !
The steel glimmers not for the carving of the banquet,
It is hard, broad, and sharply pointed ;
The torch goeth not to the bridal chamber,
It steams and glitters blue with sulphur.
Whet the steel, the raven croaks !
Light the torch, Zernebock is yelling !
Whet the steel, sons of the Dragon !
Kindle the torch, daughter of Hengist !

The black cloud is low over the thane's castle ;
The eagle screams — he rides on its bosom.
Scream not, grey rider of the sable cloud,
Thy banquet is prepared !
The maidens of Valhalla look forth,
The race of Hengist will send them guests.
Shake your black tresses, maidens of Valhalla !
And strike your loud timbrels for joy !
Many a haughty step bends to your halls,

Many a helmed head.
Dark sits the evening upon the thame's castle,
The black clouds gather round ;
Soon shall they be red as the brood of the valiant !
The destroyer of forests shall shake his red crest against them.
He, the bright consumer of palaces,
Broad waves he his blazing banner ;
Red, wide, and dusky,
Over the strife of the valiant :
His joy is in the clashing swords and broken bucklers ;
He loves to lick the hissing blood as it bursts warm from the wound !

All must perish !
The sword cleaveth the helmet ;
The strong armour is pierced by the lance ;
Fire devoureth the dwelling of princes ;
Engines break down the fences of the battle.
All must perish !
The race of Hengist is gone —
The name of Horsa is no more !
Shrink not then from your doom, sons of the sword !
Let your blades drink blood like wine ;
Feast ye in the banquet of slaughter,
By the light of the blazing halls !
Strong be your swords while your blood is warm,
And spare neither for pity nor fear,
For vengeance hath but an hour ;
Strong hate itself shall expire !
I also must perish !¹

The towering flames had now surmounted every obstruction, and rose to the evening skies one huge and burning beacon, seen far and wide through the adjacent country. Tower after tower crashed down, with blazing roof and rafter ; and the combatants were driven from the courtyard. The vanquished, of whom very few remained, scattered and escaped into the neighbouring wood. The victors, assembling in large bands, gazed with wonder, not unmixed with fear, upon the flames, in which their own ranks and arms glanced dusky red. The maniac figure of the Saxon Ulrica was for a long time visible on the lofty stand she had chosen, tossing her arms abroad with wild exultation, as if she reigned empress of the conflagration which she had raised. At length, with a terrific crash, the whole turret gave way, and she perished in the flames which had consumed her tyrant. An awful pause of horror silenced each murmur of the armed spectators, who, for the space of several minutes, stirred not a finger, save to sign the cross. The

¹ See Ulrica's Death-Song. Note 19.

voice of Locksley was then heard — 'Shout, yeomen ! the den of tyrants is no more ! Let each bring his spoil to our chosen place of rendezvous at the trysting-tree in the Harthill Walk ; for there at break of day will we make just partition among our own bands, together with our worthy allies in this great deed of vengeance.'

CHAPTER XXXII

Trust me, each state must have its policies :
Kingdoms have edicts, cities have their charters ;
Even the wild outlaw, in his forest-walk,
Keeps yet some touch of civil discipline ;
For not since Adam wore his verdant apron,
Hath man with man in social union dwelt,
But laws were made to draw that union closer.

Old Play.

THE daylight had dawned upon the glades of the oak forest. The green boughs glittered with all their pearls of dew. The hind led her fawn from the covert of high fern to the more open walks of the greenwood, and no huntsman was there to watch or intercept the stately hart, as he paced at the head of the antlered herd.

The outlaws were all assembled around the trysting-tree in the Harthill Walk, where they had spent the night in refreshing themselves after the fatigues of the siege — some with wine, some with slumber, many with hearing and recounting the events of the day, and computing the heaps of plunder which their success had placed at the disposal of their chief.

The spoils were indeed very large ; for, notwithstanding that much was consumed, a great deal of plate, rich armour, and splendid clothing had been secured by the exertions of the dauntless outlaws, who could be appalled by no danger when such rewards were in view. Yet so strict were the laws of their society, that no one ventured to appropriate any part of the booty, which was brought into one common mass, to be at the disposal of their leader.

The place of rendezvous was an aged oak ; not, however, the same to which Locksley had conducted Gurth and Wamba in the earlier part of the story, but one which was the centre of a silvan amphitheatre, within half a mile of the demolished castle of Torquilstone. Here Locksley assumed his seat — a throne

of turf erected under the twisted branches of the huge oak, and the silvan followers were gathered around him. He assigned to the Black Knight a seat at his right hand, and to Cedric a place upon his left.

'Pardon my freedom, noble sirs,' he said, 'but in these glades I am monarch: they are my kingdom; and these my wild subjects would reck but little of my power, were I, within my own dominions, to yield place to mortal man. Now, sirs, who hath seen our chaplain? where is our curtal friar? A mass amongst Christian men best begins a busy morning.' No one had seen the clerk of Copmanhurst. 'Over God's forbode!' said the outlaw chief, 'I trust the jolly priest hath but abidden by the wine-pot a thought too late. Who saw him since the castle was taken?'

'I,' quoth the Miller, 'marked him busy about the door of a cellar, swearing by each saint in the calendar he would taste the smack of Front-de-Bœuf's Gascoigne wine.'

'Now, the saints, as many as there be of them,' said the captain, 'forefend, lest he has drunk too deep of the wine-butts, and perished by the fall of the castle! Away, Miller! take with you enow of men, seek the place where you last saw him, throw water from the moat on the scorching ruins; I will have them removed stone by stone ere I lose my curtal friar.'

The numbers who hastened to execute this duty, considering that an interesting division of spoil was about to take place, showed how much the troop had at heart the safety of their spiritual father.

'Meanwhile, let us proceed,' said Locksley; 'for when this bold deed shall be sounded abroad, the bands of De Bracy, of Malvoisin, and other allies of Front-de-Bœuf, will be in motion against us, and it were well for our safety that we retreat from the vicinity. Noble Cedric,' he said, turning to the Saxon, 'that spoil is divided into two portions; do thou make choice of that best suits thee, to recompense thy people who were partakers with us in this adventure.'

'Good yeoman,' said Cedric, 'my heart is oppressed with sadness. The noble Athelstane of Coningsburgh is no more - the last sprout of the sainted Confessor! Hopes have perished with him which can never return! A sparkle hath been quenched by his blood which no human breath can again rekindle! My people, save the few who are now with me, do but tarry my presence to transport his honoured remains to their last mansion. The Lady Rowena is desirous to return to

Rotherwood, and must be escorted by a sufficient force. I should, therefore, ere now have left this place; and I waited, not to share the booty, for, so help me God and St. Withold! as neither I nor any of mine will touch the value of a liard — I waited but to render my thanks to thee and to thy bold yeomen, for the life and honour you have saved.'

'Nay, but,' said the chief outlaw, 'we did but half the work at most; take of the spoil what may reward your own neighbours and followers.'

'I am rich enough to reward them from mine own wealth,' answered Cedric.

'And some,' said Wamba, 'have been wise enough to reward themselves; they do not march off empty-handed altogether. We do not all wear motley.'

'They are welcome,' said Locksley; 'our laws bind none but ourselves.'

'But thou, my poor knave,' said Cedric, turning about and embracing his Jester, 'how shall I reward thee, who feared not to give thy body to chains and death instead of mine? All forsook me, when the poor fool was faithful!'

A tear stood in the eye of the rough thane as he spoke — a mark of feeling which even the death of Athelstane had not extracted; but there was something in the half-instinctive attachment of his clown that waked his nature more keenly than even grief itself.

'Nay,' said the Jester, extricating himself from his master's caress, 'if you pay my service with the water of your eye, the Jester must weep for company, and then what becomes of his vocation? But, uncle, if you would indeed pleasure me, I pray you to pardon my playfellow Gurth, who stole a week from your service to bestow it on your son.'

'Pardon him!' exclaimed Cedric; 'I will both pardon and reward him. Kneel down, Gurth.' 'The swineherd was in an instant at his master's feet. 'THEOW and ESNE' art thou no longer,' said Cedric, touching him with a wand; 'FOLKFREE and SACLESS² art thou in town and from town, in the forest as in the field. A hide of land I give to thee in my steads of Walburgham, from me and mine to thee and thine aye and for ever; and God's malison on his head who this gainsays!'

No longer a serf but a freeman and a landholder, Gurth sprang upon his feet, and twice bounded aloft to almost his own height from the ground.

¹ Thrall and bondsman.

² A lawful freeman.

'A smith and a file,' he cried, 'to do away the collar from the neck of a freeman! Noble master! doubled is my strength by your gift, and doubly will I fight for you! There is a free spirit in my breast. I am a man changed to myself and all around. Ha, Fangs!' he continued, for that faithful cur, seeing his master thus transported, began to jump upon him to express his sympathy, 'knowest thou thy master still?'

'Ay,' said Wamba, 'Fangs and I still know thee, Gurth, though we must needs abide by the collar; it is only thou art likely to forget both us and thyself.'

'I shall forget myself indeed ere I forget thee, true comrade, said Gurth; 'and were freedom fit for thee, Wamba, the master would not let thee want it.'

'Nay,' said Wamba, 'never think I envy thee, brother Gurth; the serf sits by the hall fire when the freeman must forth to the field of battle. And what saith Aldhelm of Malmsbury — "Better a fool at a feast than a wise man at a fray."'

The tramp of horses was now heard, and the Lady Rowena appeared, surrounded by several riders, and a much stronger party of footmen, who joyfully shook their pikes and clashed their brown-bills for joy of her freedom. She herself, richly attired, and mounted on a dark chestnut palfrey, had recovered all the dignity of her manner, and only an unwonted degree of paleness showed the sufferings she had undergone. Her lovely brow, though sorrowful, bore on it a cast of reviving hope for the future, as well as of grateful thankfulness for the past deliverance. She knew that Ivanhoe was safe, and she knew that Athelstane was dead. The former assurance filled her with the most sincere delight; and if she did not absolutely rejoice at the latter, she might be pardoned for feeling the full advantage of being freed from further persecution on the only subject in which she had ever been contradicted by her guardian Cedric.

As Rowena bent her steed towards Locksley's seat, that bold yeoman, with all his followers, rose to receive her, as if by general instinct of courtesy. The blood rose to her cheeks as, courteously waving her hand, and bending so low that her beautiful and loose tresses were for an instant mixed with the flowing mane of her palfrey, she expressed in few but apt words her obligations and her gratitude to Locksley and her other deliverers. 'God bless you, brave men,' she concluded — 'God and Our Lady bless you and requite you for gallantly perilling yourselves in the cause of the oppressed! If any of you should

hunger, remember Rowena has food ; if you should thirst, she has many a butt of wine and brown ale ; and if the Normans drive ye from these walks, Rowena has forests of her own, where her gallant deliverers may range at full freedom, and never ranger ask whose arrow hath struck down the deer.

'Thanks, gentle lady,' said Locksley — 'thanks from my company and myself. But to have saved you requites itself. We who walk the greenwood do many a wild deed, and the Lady Rowena's deliverance may be received as an atonement.'

Again bowing from her palfrey, Rowena turned to depart ; but pausing a moment, while Cedric, who was to attend her, was also taking his leave, she found herself unexpectedly close by the prisoner De Bracy. He stood under a tree in deep meditation, his arms crossed upon his breast, and Rowena was in hopes that she might pass him unobserved. He looked up, however, and, when aware of her presence, a deep flush of shame suffused his handsome countenance. He stood a moment most irresolute ; then, stepping forward, took her palfrey by the rein and bent his knee before her.

'Will the Lady Rowena deign to cast an eye on a captive knight — on a dishonoured soldier ?'

'Sir Knight,' answered Rowena, 'in enterprises such as yours, the real dishonour lies not in failure, but in success.'

'Conquest, lady, should soften the heart,' answered De Bracy ; 'let me but know that the Lady Rowena forgives the violence occasioned by an ill-fated passion, and she shall soon learn that De Bracy knows how to serve her in nobler ways.'

'I forgive you, Sir Knight,' said Rowena, 'as a Christian.'

'That means,' said Wamba, 'that she does not forgive him at all.'

'But I can never forgive the misery and desolation your madness has occasioned,' continued Rowena.

'Unloose your hold on the lady's rein,' said Cedric, coming up. 'By the bright sun above us, but it were shame, I would pin thee to the earth with my javelin ; but be well assured, thou shalt smart, Maurice de Bracy, for thy share in this foul deed.'

'He threatens safely who threatens a prisoner,' said De Bracy ; 'but when had a Saxon any touch of courtesy ?'

Then retiring two steps backward, he permitted the lady to move on.

Cedric, ere they departed, expressed his peculiar gratitude to the Black Champion, and earnestly entreated him to accompany him to Rotherwood.

'I know,' he said, 'that ye errant knights desire to carry your fortunes on the point of your lance, and reck not of lands or goods; but war is a changeful mistress, and a home is sometimes desirable even to the champion whose trade is wandering. Thou hast earned one in the halls of Rotherwood, noble knight. Cedric has wealth enough to repair the injuries of fortune, and all he has is his deliverer's. Come, therefore, to Rotherwood, not as a guest, but as a son or brother.'

'Cedric has already made me rich,' said the Knight; 'he has taught me the value of Saxon virtue. To Rotherwood will I come, brave Saxon, and that speedily; but, as now, pressing matters of moment detain me from your halls. Peradventure, when I come hither, I will ask such a boon as will put even thy generosity to the test.'

'It is granted ere spoken out,' said Cedric, striking his ready hand into the gauntleted palm of the Black Knight — 'it is granted already, were it to affect half my fortune.'

'Gage not thy promise so lightly,' said the Knight of the Fetterlock; 'yet well I hope to gain the boon I shall ask. Meanwhile, adieu.'

'I have but to say,' added the Saxon, 'that, during the funeral rites of the noble Athelstane, I shall be an inhabitant of the halls of his castle of Coningsburgh. They will be open to all who choose to partake of the funeral banqueting; and — I speak in name of the noble Edith, mother of the fallen prince — they will never be shut against him who laboured so bravely, though unsuccessfully, to save Athelstane from Norman chains and Norman steel.'

'Ay, ay,' said Wamba, who had resumed his attendance on his master, 'rare feeding there will be; pity that the noble Athelstane cannot banquet at his own funeral. But he,' continued the Jester, lifting up his eyes gravely, 'is supping in Paradise, and doubtless does honour to the cheer.'

'Peace, and move on,' said Cedric, his anger at this untimely jest being checked by the recollection of Wamba's recent services. Rowena waved a graceful adieu to him of the Fetterlock, the Saxon bade God speed him, and on they moved through a wide glade of the forest.

They had scarce departed, ere a sudden procession moved from under the greenwood branches, swept slowly round the silvan amphitheatre, and took the same direction with Rowena and her followers. The priests of a neighbouring convent, in expectation of the ample donation, or 'soul-scat,' which Cedric

had propined, attended upon the car in which the body of Athelstane was laid, and sang hymns as it was sadly and slowly borne on the shoulders of his vassals to his castle of Coningsburgh, to be there deposited in the grave of Hengist, from whom the deceased derived his long descent. Many of his vassals had assembled at the news of his death, and followed the bier with all the external marks, at least, of dejection and sorrow. Again the outlaws arose, and paid the same rude and spontaneous homage to death which they had so lately rendered to beauty: the slow chant and mournful step of the priests brought back to their remembrance such of their comrades as had fallen in the yesterday's affray. But such recollections dwell not long with those who lead a life of danger and enterprise, and ere the sound of the death-hymn had died on the wind, the outlaws were again busied in the distribution of their spoil.

'Valiant knight,' said Locksley to the Black Champion, 'without whose good heart and mighty arm our enterprise must altogether have failed, will it please you to take from that mass of spoil whatever may best serve to pleasure you, and to remind you of this my trysting-tree?'

'I accept the offer,' said the Knight, 'as frankly as it is given; and I ask permission to dispose of Sir Maurice de Bracy at my own pleasure.'

'He is thine already,' said Locksley, 'and well for him! else the tyrant had graced the highest bough of this oak, with as many of his free Companions as we could gather hanging thick as acorns around him. But he is thy prisoner, and he is safe, though he had slain my father.'

'De Bracy,' said the Knight, 'thou art free—depart. He whose prisoner thou art scorns to take mean revenge for what is past. But beware of the future, lest a worse thing befall thee. Maurice de Bracy, I say BEWARE!'

De Bracy bowed low and in silence, and was about to withdraw, when the yeomen burst at once into a shout of execration and derision. The proud knight instantly stopped, turned back, folded his arms, drew up his form to its full height, and exclaimed, 'Peace, ye yelping curs! who open upon a cry which ye followed not when the stag was at bay. De Bracy scorns your censure as he would disdain your applause. To your brakes and caves, ye outlawed thieves! and be silent when aught knightly or noble is but spoken within a league of your fox-earths.'

This ill-timed defiance might have procured for De Bracy a volley of arrows, but for the hasty and imperative interference

of the outlaw chief. Meanwhile, the knight caught a horse by the rein, for several which had been taken in the stables of Front-de-Bœuf stood accoutred around, and were a valuable part of the booty. He threw himself upon the saddle, and galloped off through the wood.

When the bustle occasioned by this incident was somewhat composed, the chief outlaw took from his neck the rich horn and baldric which he had recently gained at the strife of archery near Ashby.

'Noble knight,' he said to him of the Fetterlock, 'if you disdain not to grace by your acceptance a bugle which an English yeoman has once worn, this will I pray you to keep as a memorial of your gallant bearing; and if ye have aught to do, and, as happeneth oft to a gallant knight, ye chance to be hard bested in any forest between Trent and Tees, wind three mots¹ upon the horn thus, *Wa-sa-hoa!* and it may well chance ye shall find helpers and rescue.'

He then gave breath to the bugle, and winded once and again the call which he described, until the Knight had caught the notes.

'Gramercy for the gift, bold yeoman,' said the Knight; 'and better help than thine and thy rangers would I never seek, were it at my utmost need.' And then in his turn he winded the call till all the greenwood rang.

'Well blown and clearly,' said the yeoman; 'beshrew me an thou knowest not as much of woodcraft as of war! Thou hast been a striker of deer in thy day, I warrant. Comrades, mark these three mots, it is the call of the Knight of the Fetterlock; and he who hears it, and hastens not to serve him at his need, I will have him scourged out of our band with his own bowstring.'

'Long live our leader!' shouted the yeomen, 'and long live the Black Knight of the Fetterlock! May he soon use our service to prove how readily it will be paid.'

Locksley now proceeded to the distribution of the spoil, which he performed with the most laudable impartiality. A tenth part of the whole was set apart for the church and for pious uses; a portion was next allotted to a sort of public treasury; a part was assigned to the widows and children of those who had fallen, or to be expended in masses for the souls of such as had left no surviving family. The rest was divided amongst the outlaws, according to their rank and merit; and

¹ The notes upon the bugles were anciently called mots, and are distinguished in the old treatises on hunting, not by musical characters, but by written words.

the judgment of the chief, on all such doubtful questions as occurred, was delivered with great shrewdness, and received with absolute submission. The Black Knight was not a little surprised to find that men in a state so lawless were nevertheless among themselves so regularly and equitably governed, and all that he observed added to his opinion of the justice and judgment of their leader.

When each had taken his own proportion of the booty, and while the treasurer, accompanied by four tall yeomen, was transporting that belonging to the state to some place of concealment or of security, the portion devoted to the church still remained unappropriated.

'I would,' said the leader, 'we could hear tidings of our joyous chaplain; he was never wont to be absent when meat was to be blessed, or spoil to be parted; and it is his duty to take care of these the tithes of our successful enterprise. It may be the office has helped to cover some of his canonical irregularities. Also, I have a holy brother of his a prisoner at no great distance, and I would fain have the Friar to help me to deal with him in due sort. I greatly misdoubt the safety of the bluff priest.'

'I were right sorry for that,' said the Knight of the Fetterlock, 'for I stand indebted to him for the joyous hospitality of a merry night in his cell. Let us to the ruins of the castle; it may be we shall there learn some tidings of him.'

While they thus spoke, a loud shout among the yeomen announced the arrival of him for whom they feared, as they learned from the stentorian voice of the Friar himself, long before they saw his burly person.

'Make room, my merry men!' he exclaimed — 'room for your godly father and his prisoner. Cry welcome once more. I come, noble leader, like an eagle with my prey in my clutch.' And making his way through the ring, amidst the laughter of all around, he appeared in majestic triumph, his huge partizan in one hand, and in the other a halter, one end of which was fastened to the neck of the unfortunate Isaac of York, who, bent down by sorrow and terror, was dragged on by the victorious priest, who shouted aloud, 'Where is Allan-a-Dale, to chronicle me in a ballad, or if it were but a lay? By St. Hermangild, the jingling crowder is ever out of the way where there is an apt theme for exalting valour!'

'Curtal priest,' said the captain, 'thou hast been at a wet mass this morning, as early as it is. In the name of St. Nicholas, whom hast thou got here?'

'A captive to my sword and to my lance, noble captain,' replied the clerk of Copmanhurst — 'to my bow and to my halberd, I should rather say; and yet I have redeemed him by my divinity from a worse captivity. Speak, Jew — have I not ransomed thee from Sathanas? — have I not taught thee thy *credo*, thy *pater*, and thine *Ave Maria*? Did I not spend the whole night in drinking to thee, and in expounding of mysteries?'

'For the love of God!' ejaculated the poor Jew, 'will no one take me out of the keeping of this mad — I mean this holy man?'

'How's this, Jew?' said the Friar, with a menacing aspect; 'dost thou recant, Jew? Bethink thee, if thou dost relapse into thine infidelity, though thou art not so tender as a suckling pig — I would I had one to break my fast upon — thou art not too tough to be roasted! Be conformable, Isaac, and repeat the words after me. *Ave Maria*! —'

'Nay, we will have no profanation, mad priest,' said Locksley; 'let us rather hear where you found this prisoner of thine.'

'By St. Dunstan,' said the Friar, 'I found him where I sought for better ware! I did step into the cellarage to see what might be rescued there; for though a cup of burnt wine, with spice, be an evening's draught for an emperor, it were waste, methought, to let so much good liquor be mulled at once; and I caught up one runlet of sack, and was coming to call more aid among these lazy knaves, who are ever to seek when a good deed is to be done, when I was advised of a strong door. "Aha!" thought I, "here is the choicest juice of all in this secret crypt; and the knave butler, being disturbed in his vocation, hath left the key in the door." I therefore I went, and found just nought besides a commodious of rusted chains and this dog of a Jew, who presently considered himself my prisoner, rescue or no rescue. I did but refresh myself after the fatigue of the action with the unbeliever with one humming cup of sack, and was proceeding to lead forth my captive, when, crash after crash, as with wild thunder-dint and levin-fire, down toppled the masonry of an outer tower — marry beshrew their hands that built it not the firmer! — and blocked up the passage. The roar of one falling tower followed another. I gave up thought of life; and deeming it a dishonour to one of my profession to pass out of this world in company with a Jew — I heaved up my halberd to beat his brains out; but I

took pity on his grey hairs, and judged it better to lay down the partizan, and take up my spiritual weapon for his conversion. And truly, by the blessing of St. Dunstan, the seed has been sown in good soil; only that, with speaking to him of mysteries through the whole night, and being in a manner fasting — for the few draughts of sack which I sharpened my wits with were not worth marking — my head is wellnigh dizzied, I trow. But I was clean exhausted. Gilbert and Wibbald know in what state they found me — quite and clean exhausted.'

'We can bear witness,' said Gilbert; 'for when we had cleared away the ruin, and by St. Dunstan's help lighted upon the dungeon stair, we found the runlet of sack half-empty, the Jew half-dead, and the Friar more than half — exhausted, as he calls it.'

'Ye be knaves! ye lie!' retorted the offended Friar; 'it was you and your gormandising companions that drank up the sack, and called it your morning draught. I am a pagan, and I kept it not for the captain's own throat. But what reck's it? The Jew is converted, and understands all I have told him, very nearly, if not altogether, as well as myself.'

'Jew,' said the captain, 'is this true? Hast thou renounced thine unbelief?'

'May I so find mercy in your eyes,' said the Jew, 'as I know not one word which the reverend prelate spake to me all this fearful night. Alas! I was so distraught with agony, and fear, and grief, that had our holy father Abraham come to preach to me, he had found but a deaf listener.'

'Thou liest, Jew, and thou knowest thou dost,' said the Friar; 'I will remind thee but of one word of our conference: thou didst promise to give all thy substance to our holy order.'

'So help me the promise, fair sirs,' said Isaac, even more alarmed than before, 'as no such sounds ever crossed my lips! Alas! I am an aged beggar'd man — I fear me a childless; have ruth on me, and let me go!'

'Nay,' said the Frair, 'if thou dost retract vows made in favour of holy church, thou must do penance.'

Accordingly, he raised his halberd, and would have laid the staff of it lustily on the Jew's shoulders, had not the Black Knight stopped the blow, and thereby transferred the holy clerk's resentment to himself.

'By St. Thomas of Kent,' said he, 'an I buckle to my gear,

I will teach thee, sir lazy lover, to mell with thine own matters, mangre thine iron onse there!

'Nay, be not wroth with me,' said the Knight; 'thou knowest I am thy sworn friend and comrade.'

'I know no such thing,' answered the Friar; 'and defy thee for a meddling coxcomb!'

'Nay, but,' said the Knight, who seemed to take a pleasure in provoking his quondam host, 'hast thou forgotten how, that for my sake — for I say nothing of the temptation of the flagon and the patty — thou didst break thy vow of fast and vigil?'

'Truly friend,' said the Friar, clenching his huge fist, 'I will bestow a buffet on thee.'

'I accept of no such presents,' said the Knight; 'I am content to take thy cuff as a loan, but I will repay thee with another as dear as that for thy prisoner there exacted in his traffic.'

'I will prove that presently,' said the Friar.

'Holla!' cried the captain, 'what art thou after, mad Friar — brawling beneath our trysting-tree?'

'No brawling,' said the Knight; 'it is but a friendly interchange of courtesy. Friar, strike an thou darest; I will stand thy blow, if thou wilt stand mine.'

'Thou hast the advantage with that iron pot on thy head,' said the churchman; 'but have at thee. Down thou goest, an thou wert Goliath of Gath in his brazen helmet.'

The Friar bared his brawny arm up to the elbow, and putting his full strength to the blow, gave the Knight a buffet that might have felled an ox. But his adversary stood firm as a rock. A loud shout was uttered by all the yeomen around; for the clerk's cuff was proverbial amongst them, and there were few who, in jest or earnest, had not had occasion to know its vigour.

'Now, priest,' said the Knight, pulling off his gauntlet, 'if I had vantage on my head, I will have none on my hand; stand fast as a true man.'

'*Genam meam dedi vapulatori* — I have given my cheek to the smiter,' said the priest; 'an thou canst stir me from the spot, fellow, I will freely bestow on thee the Jew's ransom.'

So spoke the burly priest, assuming, on his part, high defiance. But who may resist his fate? The buffet of the Knight was given with such strength and good-will that the Friar rolled head over heels upon the plain, to the great amazement of all the spectators. But he arose neither angry nor crestfallen.

'Brother,' said he to the Knight, 'thou shouldst have used

¹ See Richard Cœur-de-Lion. Note 20.

thy strength with more discretion. I had mumbled but a lame mass an thou hadst broken my jaw, for the piper plays ill that wants the nether chop. Nevertheless, there is my hand, in friendly witness that I will exchange no more cuffs with thee, having been a loser by the barter. End now all unkindness. Let us put the Jew to ransom, since the leopard will not change his spots, and a Jew he will continue to be.

'The priest,' said Clement, 'is not half so confident of the Jew's conversion since he received that buffet on the ear.'

'Go to, knave, what pratest thou of conversions? What, is there no respect? — all masters and no men? I tell thee, fellow, I was somewhat totty when I received the good knight's blow, or I had kept my ground under it. But an thou givest more of it, thou shalt learn I can give as well as take.'

'Peace all!' said the captain. 'And thou, Jew, think of thy ransom; thou needest not to be told that thy race are held to be accursed in all Christian communities, and trust me that we cannot endure thy presence among us. Think, therefore, of an offer, while I examine a prisoner of another cast.'

'Were many of Front-de-Bœuf's men taken?' demanded the Black Knight.

'None of note enough to be put to ransom,' answered the captain: 'a set of hilding fellows there were, whom we dismissed to find them a new master; enough had been done for revenge and profit; the bunch of them were not worth a cardecu. The prisoner I speak of is better booty — a jolly monk riding to visit his leman, an I may judge by his horse-gear and wearing apparel. Here cometh the worthy prelate, as pert as a pyet.' And between two yeomen was brought before the silvan throne of the outlaw chief our friend, Pryor Aymer of Jorvaulx.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Flower of warriors,
How dost thou with Titus Lartius?
Marcius. As with a man busied about decrees,
Condemning some to death and some to exile,
Ransoming him or pitying, threatening the other.

Coriolanus.

THE captive Abbot's features and manners exhibited a whimsical mixture of offended pride, and deranged foppery, and bodily terror.

'Why, how now, my masters?' said he, with a voice in which all three emotions were blended. 'What order is this among ye? Be ye Turks or Christians, that handle a churchman? Know ye that it is, *manus imponere in servos Domini*? Ye have plundered my mails, torn my cope of curious cut lace, which might have served a cardinal. Another in my place would have been at his *excommunicabo vos*; but I am placable, and if ye order forth my palfreys, release my brethren, and restore my mails, tell down with all speed an hundred crowns to be expended in masses at the high altar of Jorvaulx Abbey, and revoke your vow to eat no venison until next Pentecost, it may be you shall hear little more of this mad frolic.'

'Holy father,' said the chief outlaw, 'it grieves me to think that you have met with such usage from any of my followers as calls for your fatherly reprehension.'

'Usage!' echoed the priest, encouraged by the mild tone of the silvan leader; 'it were usage fit for no hound of good race, much less for a Christian, far less for a priest, and least of all for the prior of the holy community of Jorvaulx. Here is a profane and drunken minstrel called Allan-a-Dale — *nebulo quidam* — who has menaced me with corporal punishment — nay, with death itself, an I pay not down four hundred crowns of ransom, to the boot of all the treasure he hath already robbed me of — gold chains and gymnal rings to an unknown

value; besides what is broken and spoiled among their rude hands, such as my pouncet-box and silver crisping-tonga.'

'It is impossible that Allan-a-Dale can have thus treated a man of your reverend bearing,' replied the captain.

'It is true as the gospel of St. Nicodemus,' said the Prior; 'he swore, with many a cruel north-country oath, that he would hang me up on the highest tree in the greenwood.'

'Did he so in very deed? Nay, then, reverend father, I think you had better comply with his demands, for Allan-a-Dale is the very man to abide by his word when he has so pledged it.'¹

'You do but jest with me,' said the astounded Prior, with a forced laugh; 'and I love a good jest with all my heart. But, ha! ha! ha! when the mirth has lasted the livelong night, it is time to be grave in the morning.'

'And I am as grave as a father confessor,' replied the outlaw; 'you must pay a round ransom, Sir Prior, or your convent is likely to be called to a new election; for your place will know you no more.'

'Are ye Christians,' said the Prior, 'and hold this language to a churchman!'

'Christians! ay, marry are we, and have divinity among us to boot,' answered the outlaw. 'Let our buxom chaplain stand forth, and expound to this reverend father the texts which concern this matter.'

The Friar, half-drunk, half-sober, had huddled a friar's frock over his green cassock, and now summoning together whatever scraps of learning he had acquired by rote in former days—'Holy father,' said he, '*Deus faciat salvam benignitatem vestram*—you are welcome to the greenwood.'

'What profane mummery is this?' said the Prior. 'Friend, if thou be'st indeed of the church, it were a better deed to show me how I may escape from these men's hands than to stand ducking and grinning here like a morris-dancer.'

'Truly, reverend father,' said the Friar, 'I know but one mode in which thou mayest escape. This is St. Andrew's day with us: we are taking our tithes.'

'But not of the church, then, I trust, my good brother?' said the Prior.

'Of church and lay,' said the Friar; 'and therefore, Sir

¹ A commissary is said to have received similar consolation from a certain commander-in-chief, to whom he complained that a general officer had used some such threat towards him as that in the text.

Prior, *facite vobis amicos de mammon iniquitatis* — make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, for no other friendship is like to serve your turn.

'I love a jolly woodsman at heart,' said the Prior, softening his tone; 'come, ye must not deal too hard with me. I can well of woodcraft, and can wind a horn clear and lustily, and hollo till every oak rings again. Come, ye must not deal too hard with me.'

'Give him a horn,' said the outlaw; 'we will prove the skill he boasts of.'

The Prior Aymer winded a blast accordingly. The captain shook his head.

'Sir Prior,' he said, 'thou blowest a merry note, but it may not ransom thee; we cannot afford, as the legend on a good knight's shield hath it, to set thee free for a blast. Moreover, I have found thee: thou art one of those who, with new French graces and tra-li-ras, disturb the ancient English bugle notes. Prior, that last flourish on the recheat hath added fifty crowns to thy ransom, for corrupting the true old manly blasts of venerie.'

'Well, friend,' said the Abbot, peevishly, 'thou art ill to please with thy woodcraft. I pray thee be more conformable in this matter of my ransom. At a word — since I must needs, for once, hold a candle to the devil — what ransom am I to pay for walking on Watling Street without having fifty men at my back?'

'Were it not well,' said the lieutenant of the gang apart to the captain, 'that the Prior should name the Jew's ransom, and the Jew name the Prior's?'

'Thou art a mad knave,' said the captain, 'but thy plan transcends! Here, Jew, step forth. Look at that holy Father Aymer, Prior of the rich Abbey of Jorvaulx,¹ and tell us at what ransom we should hold him? Thou knowest the income of his convent, I warrant thee.'

'O, assuredly,' said Isaac. 'I have trafficked with the good fathers, and bought wheat and barley, and fruits of the earth, and also much wool. O, it is a rich abbey-stede, and they do live upon the fat, and drink the sweet wines upon the lees, these good fathers of Jorvaulx. Ah, if an outcast like me had such a home to go to, and such incomings by the year and by the month, I would pay much gold and silver to redeem my captivity.'

'Hound of a Jew!' exclaimed the Prior, 'no one knows better than thy own cursed self that our holy house of God is indebted for the finishing of our chancel —'

¹ See Note 21.

'And for the storing of your cellars in the last season with the due allowance of Gascon wine,' interrupted the Jew; 'but that — that is small matters.'

'Hear the infidel dog!' said the churchman; 'he jangles as if our holy community did come under debts for the wines we have a license to drink *propter necessitatem et ad frigus depellendum*. The circumcised villain blasphemeth the holy church, and Christian men listen and rebuke him not!'

'All this helps nothing,' said the leader. 'Isaac, pronounce what he may pay, without slaying both hide and hair.'

'An six hundred crowns,' said Isaac, 'the good Prior might well pay to your honoured valours, and never sit less soft in his stall.'

'Six hundred crowns,' said the leader, gravely; 'I am contented — thou hast well spoken, Isaac — six hundred crowns. It is a sentence, Sir Prior.'

'A sentence! — a sentence!' exclaimed the band; 'Solomon had not done it better.'

'Thou hearest thy doom, Prior,' said the leader.

'Ye are mad, my masters,' said the Prior; 'where am I to find such a sum? If I sell the very pyx and candlesticks on the altar at Jorvaulx, I shall scarce raise the half; and it will be necessary for that purpose that I go to Jorvaulx myself; ye may retain as borrows¹ my two priests.'

'That will be but blind trust,' said the outlaw; 'we will retain thee, Prior, and send them to fetch thy ransom. Thou shalt not want a cup of wine and a collop of venison the while; and if thou lovest woodcraft, thou shalt see such as your north country never witnessed.'

'Or, if so please you,' said Isaac, willing to curry favour with the outlaws, 'I can send to York for the six hundred crowns, out of certain monies in my hands, if so be that the most reverend Prior present will grant me a quittance.'

'He shall grant thee whatever thou dost list, Isaac,' said the captain; 'and thou shalt lay down the redemption money for Prior Aymer as well as for thyself.'

'For myself! ah, courageous sirs,' said the Jew, 'I am a broken and impoverished man; a beggar's staff must be my portion through life, supposing I were to pay you fifty crowns.'

'The Prior shall judge of that matter,' replied the captain.

¹ Borghs, or borrows, signifies pledges. Hence our word to borrow, because we pledge ourselves to restore what is lent.

'How say you, Father Aymer? Can the Jew afford a good ransom?'

'Can he afford a ransom?' answered the Prior. 'Is he not Isaac of York, rich enough to redeem the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel who were led into Assyrian bondage? I have seen but little of him myself, but our cellarer and treasurer have dealt largely with him, and report says that his house at York is so full of gold and silver as is a shame in any Christian land. Marvel it is to all living Christian hearts that such gnawing adders should be suffered to eat into the bowels of the state, and even of the holy church herself, with foul usuries and extortions.'

'Hold, father,' said the Jew, 'mitigate and assuage your choler. I pray of your reverence to remember that I force my monies upon no one. But when churchman and layman, prince and prior, knight and priest, come knocking to Isaac's door, they borrow not his shekels with these uncivil terms. It is then, "Friend Isaac, will you pleasure us in this matter, and our day shall be truly kept, so God sa' me?" — and "Kind Isaac, if ever you served man, show yourself a friend in this need!" And when the day comes, and I ask my own, then what hear I but "Damned Jew," and "The curse of Egypt on your tribe," and all that may stir up the rude and uncivil populace against poor strangers!'

'Prior,' said the captain, 'Jew though he is, he bath in this spoken well. Do thou, therefore, name his ransom, as he named thine, without farther rude terms.'

'None but *latro famosus* — the interpretation whereof,' said the Prior, 'will I give at some other time and tide — would place a Christian prelate and an unbaptised Jew upon the same bench. But since ye require me to put a price upon this caitiff, I tell you openly that ye will wrong yourselves if you take from him a penny under a thousand crowns.'

'A sentence! — a sentence!' said the chief outlaw.

'A sentence! — a sentence!' shouted his assessors; 'the Christian has shown his good nurture, and dealt with us more generously than the Jew.'

'The God of my fathers help me!' said the Jew; 'will ye bear to the ground an impoverished creature? I am this day childless, and will ye deprive me of the means of livelihood?'

'Thou wilt have the less to provide for, Jew, if thou art childless,' said Aymer.

'Alas! my lord,' said Isaac, 'your law permits you not to

know how the child of our bosom is entwined with the strings of our heart. O Rebecca! daughter of my beloved Rachael! were each leaf on that tree a zecchin, and each zecchin mine own, all that mass of wealth would I give to know whether thou art alive, and escaped the hands of the Nazarene!’

‘Was not thy daughter dark-haired?’ said one of the outlaws; ‘and wore she not a veil of twisted sendal, broidered with silver?’

‘She did! — she did!’ said the old man, trembling with eagerness as formerly with fear. ‘The blessing of Jacob be upon thee! canst thou tell me aught of her safety?’

‘It was she, then,’ said the yeoman, ‘who was carried off by the proud Templar, when he broke through our ranks on yestern-even. I had drawn my bow to send a shaft after him, but spared him even for the sake of the damsel, who I feared might take harm from the arrow.’

‘Oh!’ answered the Jew, ‘I would to God thou hadst shot, though the arrow had pierced her bosom! Better the tomb of her fathers than the dishonourable couch of the licentious and savage Templar. Ichabod! Ichabod! the glory hath departed from my house!’

‘Friends,’ said the chief, looking round, ‘the old man is but a Jew, natheless his grief touches me. Deal uprightly with us, Isaac: will paying this ransom of a thousand crowns leave thee altogether penniless?’

Isaac, recalled to think of his worldly goods, the love of which, by dint of inveterate habit, contended even with his parental affection, grew pale, stammered, and could not deny there might be some small surplus.

‘Well, go to, what though there be,’ said the outlaw, ‘we will not reckon with thee too closely. Without treasure thou mayest as well hope to redeem thy child from the clutches of Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert as to shoot a stag-royal with a headless shaft. We will take thee at the same ransom with Prior Aymer, or rather at one hundred crowns lower, which hundred crowns shall be mine own peculiar loss, and not light upon this worshipful community; and so we shall avoid the heinous offence of rating a Jew merchant as high as a Christian prelate, and thou wilt have six [five] hundred crowns remaining to treat for thy daughter’s ransom. Templars love the glitter of silver shekels as well as the sparkle of black eyes. Hasten to make thy crowns chink in the ear of De Bois-Guilbert, ere worse comes of it. Thou wilt find him, as our scouts have

brought notice, at the next preceptory house of his order. Said I well, my merry mates?'

The yeomen expressed their wonted acquiescence in their leader's opinion; and Isaac, relieved of one half of his apprehensions, by learning that his daughter lived, and might possibly be ransomed, threw himself at the feet of the generous outlaw, and, rubbing his beard against his buskins, sought to kiss the hem o' his green cassock. The captain drew himself back, and extricated himself from the Jew's grasp, not without some marks of contempt.

'Nay, beshrew thee, man, up with thee! I am English born, and love no such Eastern prostrations. Kneel to God, and not to a poor sinner like me.'

'Ay, Jew,' said Prior Aymer, 'kneel to God, as represented in the servant of His altar, and who knows, with thy sincere repentance and due gifts to the shrine of St. Robert, what grace thou mayest acquire for thyself and thy daughter Rebecca? I grieve for the maiden, for she is of fair and comely countenance: I beheld her in the lists of Ashby. Also Brian de Bois-Guilbert is one with whom I may do much: bethink thee how thou mayest deserve my good word with him.'

'Alas! alas!' said the Jew, 'on every hand the spoilers arise against me: I am given as a prey unto the Assyrian, and a prey unto him of Egypt.'

'And what else should be the lot of thy accursed race?' answered the Prior; 'for what saith Holy Writ, *verbum Domini projecerunt, et sapientia est nulla in eis* — they have cast forth the Word of the Lord, and there is no wisdom in them — *propterea dabo mulieres eorum exteris* — I will give their women to strangers, that is to the Templar, as in the present matter — *et thesauros eorum heredibus alienis* — and their treasures to others, as in the present case to these honest gentlemen.'

Isaac groaned deeply, and began to wring his hands, and to relapse into his state of desolation and despair. But the leader of the yeomen led him aside.

'Advise thee well, Isaac,' said Locksley, 'what thou wilt do in this matter; my counsel to thee is to make a friend of this churchman. He is vain, Isaac, and he is covetous; at least he needs money to supply his profusion. Thou canst easily gratify his greed; for think not that I am blinded by thy pretexts of poverty. I am intimately acquainted, Isaac, with the very iron chest in which thou dost keep thy money-bags. What! know I not the great stone beneath the apple-tree, that

leads into the vaulted chamber under thy garden at York !' The Jew grew as pale as death. 'But fear nothing from me,' continued the yeoman, 'for we are of old acquainted. Dost thou not remember the sick yeoman whom thy fair daughter Rebecca redeemed from the gyves at York, and kept him in thy house till his health was restored, when thou didst dismiss him recovered, and with a piece of money ? Usurer as thou art, thou didst never place coin at better interest than that poor silver mark, for it has this day saved thee five hundred crowns.'

'And thou art he whom we called Diccon Bend-the-Bow ?' said Isaac ; 'I thought ever I knew the accent of thy voice.'

'I am Bend-the-Bow,' said the captain, 'and Locksley, and have a good name besides all these.'

'But thou art mistaken, good Bend-the-Bow, concerning that same vaulted apartment. So help me Heaven, as there is nought in it but some merchandise which I will gladly part with to you—one hundred yards of Lincoln green to make doublets to thy men, and a hundred staves of Spanish yew to make bows, and one hundred silken bowstrings, tough, round, and sound—these will I send thee for thy good-will, honest Diccon, an thou wilt keep silence about the vault, my good Diccon.'

'Silent as a dormouse,' said the outlaw ; 'and never trust me but I am grieved for thy daughter. But I may not help it. The Templar's lances are too strong for my archery in the open field ; they would scatter us like dust. Had I but known it was Rebecca when she was borne off, something might have been done ; but now thou must needs proceed by policy. Come, shall I treat for thee with the Prior ?'

'In God's name, Diccon, an thou canst, aid me to recover the child of my bosom !'

'Do not thou interrupt me with thine ill-timed avarice,' said the outlaw, 'and I will deal with him in thy behalf.'

He then turned from the Jew, who followed him, however, as closely as his shadow.

'Prior Aymer,' said the captain, 'come apart with me under this tree. Men say thou dost love wine and a lady's smile better than besecms thy order, Sir Priest ; but with that I have nought to do. I have heard, too, thou dost love a brace of good dogs and a fleet horse, and it may well be that, loving things which are costly to come by, thou hatest not a purse of gold. But I have never heard that thou didst love oppression or cruelty. Now, here is Isaac willing to give thee the means

of pleasure and pastime in a bag containing one hundred marks of silver, if thy intercession with thine ally the Templar shall avail to procure the freedom of his daughter.'

'In safety and honour, as when taken from me,' said the Jew, 'otherwise it is no bargain.'

'Peace, Isaac,' said the outlaw, 'or I give up thine interest. What say you to this my purpose, Prior Aymer?'

'The matter,' quoth the Prior, 'is of a mixed condition; for, if I do a good on the one hand, yet, on the other, it goeth to the vantage of a Jew, and in so much is against my conscience. Yet, if the Israelite will advantage the church by giving me somewhat over to the building of our dortour,¹ I will take it on my conscience to aid him in the matter of his daughter.'

'For a score of marks to the dortour,' said the outlaw — 'Be still, I say, Isaac! — or for a brace of silver candlesticks to the altar, we will not stand with you.'

'Nay, but, good Diccon Bend-the-Bow,' said Isaac, endeavouring to interpose.

'Good Jew — good beast — good earthworm!' said the yeoman, losing patience; 'an thou dost go on to put thy filthy lucre in the balance with thy daughter's life and honour, by Heaven, I will strip thee of every maravedi thou hast in the world before three days are out!'

Isaac shrunk together, and was silent.

'And what pledge am I to have for all this?' said the Prior.

'When Isaac returns successful through your mediation,' said the outlaw, 'I swear by St. Hubert, I will see that he pays thee the money in good silver, or I will reckon with him for it in such sort, he had better have paid twenty such sums.'

'Well then, Jew,' said Aymer, 'since I must needs meddle in this matter, let me have the use of thy writing-tablets — though, hold — rather than use thy pen, I would fast for twenty-four hours, and where shall I find one?'

'If your holy scruples can dispense with using the Jew's tablets, for the pen I can find a remedy,' said the yeoman; and, bending his bow, he aimed his shaft at a wild goose which was soaring over their heads, the advanced guard of a phalanx of his tribe, which were winging their way to the distant and solitary fens of Holderness. The bird came fluttering down, transfixing with the arrow.

'There, Prior,' said the captain, 'are quills : now to supply

¹ Dortour, or dormitory.

all the monks of Jorvaulx for the next hundred years, an they take not to writing chronicles.'

The Prior sat down, and at great leisure indited an epistle to Brian de Bois-Guilbert, and having carefully sealed up the tablets, delivered them to the Jew, saying, 'This will be thy safe-conduct to the preceptory of Templestowe, and, as I think, is most likely to accomplish the delivery of thy daughter, if it be well backed with proffers of advantage and commodity at thine own hand; for, trust me well, the good knight Bois-Guilbert is of their confraternity that do nought for nought.'

'Well, Prior,' said the outlaw, 'I will detain thee no longer here than to give the Jew a quittance for the five hundred crowns at which thy ransom is fixed — I accept of him for my paymaster; and if I hear that ye boggle at allowing him in his accompts the sum so paid by him, St. Mary refuse me, an I burn not the abbey over thine head, though I hang ten years the sooner!'

With a much worse grace than that wherewith he had penned the letter to Bois-Guilbert, the Prior wrote an acquittance, discharging Isaac of York of five hundred crowns, advanced to him in his need for acquittal of his ransom, and faithfully promising to hold true compt with him for that sum.

'And now,' said Prior Aymer, 'I will pray you of restitution of my mules and palfreys, and the freedom of the reverend brethren attending upon me, and also of the gymmal rings, jewels, and fair vestures of which I have been despoiled, having now satisfied you for my ransom as a true prisoner.'

'Touching your brethren, Sir Prior,' said Locksley, 'they shall have present freedom, it were unjust to detain them; touching your horses and mules, they shall also be restored, with such spending-money as may enable you to reach York, for it were cruel to deprive you of the means of journeying. But as concerning rings, jewels, chains, and what else, you must understand that we are men of tender consciences, and will not yield to a venerable man like yourself, who should be dead to the vanities of this life, the strong temptation to break the rule of his foundation, by wearing rings, chains, or other vain gauds.'

'Think what you do, my masters,' said the Prior, 'ere you put your hand on the church's patrimony. These things are *inter res sacras*, and I wot not what judgment might ensue were they to be handled by laical hands.'

'I will take care of that, reverend Prior,' said the hermit of Copmanhurst; 'for I will wear them myself.'

'Friend, or brother,' said the Prior, in answer to this solution of his doubts, 'if thou hast really taken religious orders, I pray thee to look how thou wilt answer to thine official for the share thou hast taken in this day's work.'

'Friend Prior,' returned the hermit, 'you are to know that I belong to a little diocese where I am my own diocesan, and care as little for the Bishop of York as I do for the Abbot of Jorvaulx, the Prior, and all the convent.'

'Thou art utterly irregular,' said the Prior — 'one of those disorderly men who, taking on them the sacred character without due cause, profane the holy rites, and endanger the souls of those who take counsel at their hands; *lapides pro pane condonantes iis*, giving them stones instead of bread, as the Vulgate hath it.'

'Nay,' said the Friar, 'an my brain-pan could have been broken by Latin, it had not held so long together. I say, that easing a world of such misproud priests as thou art of their jewels and their gimeracks is a lawful spoiling of the Egyptians.'

'Thou be'st a hedge-priest,'¹ said the Prior, in great wrath, '*excommunicabo vos*.'

'Thou be'st thyself more like a thief and a heretic,' said the Friar, equally indignant; 'I will pouch up no such affront before my parishioners as thou thinkest it not shame to put upon me, although I be a reverend brother to thee. *Ossa ejus perfringam*, I will break your bones, as the Vulgate hath it.'

'Holla!' cried the captain, 'come the reverend brethren to such terms! Keep thine assurance of peace, Friar. Prior, an thou hast not made thy peace perfect with God, provoke the Friar no further. Hermit, let the reverend father depart in peace, as a ransomed man.'

The yeomen separated the incensed priests, who continued to raise their voices, vituperating each other in bad Latin, which the Prior delivered the more fluently, and the hermit with the greater vehemence. The Prior at length recollected himself sufficiently to be aware that he was compromising his dignity by squabbling with such a hedge-priest as the outlaw's chaplain, and being joined by his attendants, rode off with considerably less pomp, and in a much more apostolical condi-

¹ See Note 22.

tion, so far as worldly matters were concerned, than he had exhibited before this rencounter.

It remained that the Jew should produce some security for the ransom which he was to pay on the Prior's account, as well as upon his own. He gave, accordingly, an order sealed with his signet, to a brother of his tribe at York, requiring him to pay to the bearer the sum of a thousand crowns, and to deliver certain merchandises specified in the note.

'My brother Sheva,' he said, groaning deeply, 'hath the key of my warehouses.'

'And of the vaulted chamber,' whispered Locksley.

'No, no — may Heaven forefend !' said Isaac ; 'evil is the hour that let any one whomsoever into that secret !'

'It is safe with me,' said the outlaw, 'so be that this thy scroll produce the sum therein nominated and set down. But what now, Isaac ? art dead ? art stupified ? hath the payment of a thousand crowns put thy daughter's peril out of thy mind ?'

The Jew started to his feet — 'No, Diccon, no ; I will presently set forth. Farewell, thou whom I may not call good, and dare not, and will not, call evil.'

Yet, ere Isaac departed, the outlaw chief bestowed on him this parting advice : 'Be liberal of thine offers, Isaac, and spare not thy purse for thy daughter's safety. Credit me, that the gold thou shalt spare in her cause will hereafter give thee as much agony as if it were poured molten down thy throat.'

Isaac acquiesced with a deep groan, and set forth on his journey, accompanied by two tall foresters, who were to be his guides, and at the same time his guards, through the wood.

The Black Knight, who had seen with no small interest these various proceedings, now took his leave of the outlaw in turn ; nor could he avoid expressing his surprise at having witnessed so much civil policy amongst persons cast out from all the ordinary protection and influence of the laws.

'Good fruit, Sir Knight,' said the yeoman, 'will sometimes grow on a sorry tree ; and evil times are not always productive of evil alone and unmixed. Amongst those who are drawn into this lawless state, there are, doubtless, numbers who wish to exercise its license with some moderation, and some who regret, it may be, that they are obliged to follow such a trade at all.'

'And to one of those,' said the Knight, 'I am now, I presume, speaking ?'

'Sir Knight,' said the outlaw, 'we have each our secret. You are welcome to form your judgment of me, and I may use my conjectures touching you, though neither of our shafts may hit the mark they are shot at. But as I do not pray to be admitted into your mystery, be not offended that I preserve my own.'

'I crave pardon, brave outlaw,' said the Knight, 'your reproof is just. But it may be we shall meet hereafter with less of concealment on either side. Meanwhile we part friends, do we not?'

'There is my hand upon it,' said Locksley; 'and I will call it the hand of a true Englishman, though an outlaw for the present.'

'And there is mine in return,' said the Knight, 'and I hold it honoured by being clasped with yours. For he that does good, having the unlimited power to do evil, deserves praise not only for the good which he performs, but for the evil which he forbears. Fare thee well, gallant outlaw!'

Thus parted that fair fellowship; and he of the Petterlock, mounting upon his strong war-horse, rode off through the forest.

CHAPTER XXXIV

King John. I'll tell thee what, my friend,
He is a very serpent in my way ;
And whereso'er this foot of mine doth tread,
He lies before me. Dost thou understand me ?

King John.

THERE was brave feasting in the Castle of York, to which Prince John had invited those nobles, prelates, and leaders by whose assistance he hoped to carry through his ambitious projects upon his brother's throne. Waldemar Fitzurse, his able and politic agent, was at secret work among them, tempering all to that pitch of courage which was necessary in making an open declaration of their purpose. But their enterprise was delayed by the absence of more than one main limb of the confederacy. The stubborn and daring, though brutal, courage of Front-de-Bœuf ; the buoyant spirits and bold bearing of De Bracy ; the sagacity, martial experience, and renowned valour of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, were important to the success of their conspiracy ; and, while cursing in secret their unnecessary and unmeaning absence, neither John nor his adviser dared to proceed without them. Isaac the Jew also seemed to have vanished, and with him the hope of certain sums of money, making up the subsidy for which Prince John had contracted with that Israelite and his brethren. This deficiency was likely to prove perilous in an emergency so critical.

It was on the morning after the fall of Torquilstone, that a confused report began to spread abroad in the city of York that De Bracy and Bois-Guilbert, with their confederate Front-de-Bœuf, had been taken or slain. Waldemar brought the rumour to Prince John, announcing, that he feared its truth the more that they had set out with a small attendance, for the purpose of committing an assault on the Saxon Cedric and his attendants. At another time the Prince would have treated this deed of violence as a good jest ; but now that it interfered with and

impeded his own plans, he exclaimed against the perpetrators, and spoke of the broken laws, and the infringement of public order and of private property, in a tone which might have become King Alfred.

'The unprincipled marauders!' he said; 'were I ever to become monarch of England, I would hang such transgressors over the drawbridges of their own castles.'

'But to become monarch of England,' said his Ahithophel, coolly, 'it is necessary not only that your Grace should endure the transgressions of these unprincipled marauders, but that you should afford them your protection, notwithstanding your laudable zeal for the laws they are in the habit of infringing. We shall be finely helped, if the churl Saxons should have realised your Grace's vision of converting feudal drawbridges into gibbets; and yonder bold-spirited Cedric seemeth one to whom such an imagination might occur. Your Grace is well aware, it will be dangerous to stir without Front-de-Bœuf, De Bracy, and the Templar; and yet we have gone too far to recede with safety.'

Prince John struck his forehead with impatience, and then began to stride up and down the apartment.

'The villains,' he said — 'the base, treacherous villains, to desert me at this pinch!'

'Nay, say rather the feather-pated, giddy madmen,' said Waldemar, 'who must be toying with follies when such business was in hand.'

'What is to be done?' said the Prince, stopping short before Waldemar.

'I know nothing which can be done,' answered his counsellor, 'save that which I have already taken order for. I come not to bewail this evil chance with your Grace until I had done my best to remedy it.'

'Thou art ever my better angel, Waldemar,' said the Prince; 'and when I have such a chancellor to advise withal, the reign of John will be renowned in our annals. What hast thou commanded?'

'I have ordered Louis Winkelbrand, De Bracy's lieutenant, to cause his trumpet sound to horse, and to display his banner, and to set presently forth towards the castle of Front-de-Bœuf, to do what yet may be done for the succour of our friends.'

Prince John's face flushed with the pride of a spoilt child, who has undergone what it conceives to be an insult.

'By the face of God!' he said, 'Waldemar Fitzurse, much

hast thou taken upon thee! and over malapert thou wert to cause trumpet to blow, or banner to be raised, in a town where ourselves were in presence, without our express command.'

'I crave your Grace's pardon,' said Fitzurse, internally cursing the idle vanity of his patron; 'but when time pressed, and even the loss of minutes might be fatal, I judged it best to take this much burden upon me, in a matter of such importance to your Grace's interest.'

'Thou art pardoned, Fitzurse,' said the Prince, gravely; 'thy purpose hath atoned for thy hasty rashness. But whom have we here? De Bracy himself, by the rood! and in strange guise doth he come before us.'

It was indeed De Bracy, 'bloody with spurring, fiery red with speed.' His armour bore all the marks of the late obstinate fray, being broken, defaced, and stained with blood in many places, and covered with clay and dust from the crest to the spur. Undoing his helmet, he placed it on the table, and stood a moment as if to collect himself before he told his news.

'De Bracy,' said Prince John, 'what means this? Speak, I charge thee! Are the Saxons in rebellion?'

'Speak, De Bracy,' said Fitzurse, almost in the same moment with his master, 'thou wert wont to be a man. Where is the Templar? where Front-de-Bœuf?'

'The Templar is fled,' said De Bracy; 'Front-de-Bœuf you will never see more. He has found a red grave among the blazing rafters of his own castle, and I alone am escaped to tell you.'

'Cold news,' said Waldemar, 'to us, though you speak of fire and conflagration.'

'The worst news is not yet said,' answered De Bracy; and, coming up to Prince John, he uttered in a low and emphatic tone — 'Richard is in England; I have seen and spoken with him.'

Prince John turned pale, tottered, and caught at the back of an oaken bench to support himself, much like to a man who receives an arrow in his bosom.

'Thou ravest, De Bracy,' said Fitzurse, 'it cannot be.'

'It is as true as truth itself,' said De Bracy; 'I was his prisoner, and spoke with him.'

'With Richard Plantagenet, sayest thou?' continued Fitzurse.

'With Richard Plantagenet,' replied De Bracy — 'with Richard Cœur-de-Lion — with Richard of England.'

'And thou wert his prisoner?' said Waldemar; 'he is then at the head of a power!'

'No; only a few outlawed yeomen were around him, and to these his person is unknown. I heard him say he was about to depart from them. He joined them only to assist at the storming of Torquilstone.'

'Ay,' said Fitzurse, 'such is indeed the fashion of Richard — a true knight-errant he, and will wander in wild adventure, trusting the prowess of his single arm, like any Sir Guy or Sir Bevis, while the weighty affairs of his kingdom slumber, and his own safety is endangered. What dost thou propose to do, De Bracy?'

'I? I offered Richard the service of my Free Lances, and he refused them. I will lead them to Hull, seize on shipping, and embark for Flanders; thanks to the bustling times, a man of action will always find employment. And thou, Waldemar, wilt thou take lance and shield, and lay down thy policies, and wend along with me, and share the fate which God sends us?'

'I am too old, Maurice, and I have a daughter,' answered Waldemar.

'Give her to me, Fitzurse, and I will maintain her as fits her rank, with the help of lance and stirrup,' said De Bracy.

'Not so,' answered Fitzurse; 'I will take sanctuary in this church of St. Peter; the Archbishop is my sworn brother.'

During this discourse, Prince John had gradually awakened from the stupor into which he had been thrown by the unexpected intelligence, and had been attentive to the conversation which passed betwixt his followers. 'They fall off from me,' he said to himself: 'they hold no more by me than a withered leaf by the bough when a breeze blows on it! Hell and fiends! can I shape no means for myself when I am deserted by these cravens?' He paused, and there was an expression of diabolical passion in the constrained laugh with which he at length broke in on their conversation.

'Ha, ha, ha! my good lords, by the light of Our Lady's brow, I held ye sage men, bold men, ready-witted men; yet ye throw down wealth, honour, pleasure, all that our noble game promised you, at the moment it might be won by one bold cast!'

'I understand you not,' said De Bracy. 'As soon as Richard's return is blown abroad, he will be at the head of an army, and all is then over with us. I would counsel you, my lord, either to fly to France or take the protection of the Queen Mother.'

'I seek no safety for myself,' said Prince John, haughtily; 'that I could secure by a word spoken to my brother. But although you, De Bracy, and you, Waldemar Fitzurse, are so ready to abandon me, I should not greatly delight to see your heads blackening on Clifford's gate yonder. Thinkest thou, Waldemar, that the wily Archbishop will not suffer thee to be taken from the very horns of the altar, would it make his peace with King Richard? And forgettest thou, De Bracy, that Robert Estoteville lies betwixt thee and Hull with all his forces, and that the Earl of Essex is gathering his followers? If we had reason to fear these levies even before Richard's return, trowest thou there is any doubt now which party their leaders will take? Trust me, Estoteville alone has strength enough to drive all thy Free Lances into the Humber.' Waldemar Fitzurse and De Bracy looked in each other's faces with blank dismay. 'There is but one road to safety,' continued the Prince, and his brow grew black as midnight: 'this object of our terror journeys alone; he must be met withal.'

'Not by me,' said De Bracy, hastily; 'I was his prisoner, and he took me to mercy. I will not harm a feather in his crest.'

'Who spoke of harming him?' said Prince John, with a hardened laugh; 'the knave will say next that I meant he should slay him! No—a prison were better; and whether in Britain or Austria, what matters it? Things will be but as they were when we commenced our enterprise. It was founded on the hope that Richard would remain a captive in Germany. Our uncle Robert lived and died in the castle of Cardiff.'

'Ay, but,' said Waldemar, 'your sire Henry sate more firm in his seat than your Grace can. I say the best prison is that which is made by the sexton: no dungeon like a church-vault! I have said my say.'

'Prison or tomb,' said De Bracy, 'I wash my hands of the whole matter.'

'Villain!' said Prince John, 'thou wouldst not bewray our counsel?'

'Counsel was never bewrayed by me,' said De Bracy, haughtily, 'nor must the name of villain be coupled with mine!'

'Peace, Sir Knight!' said Waldemar; 'and you, good my lord, forgive the scruples of valiant De Bracy; I trust I shall soon remove them.'

'That passes your eloquence, Fitzurse,' replied the knight

'Why, good Sir Maurice,' rejoined the wily politician, 'start not aside like a scared steed, without, at least, considering the object of your terror. This Richard — but a day since, and it would have been thy dearest wish to have met him hand to hand in the ranks of battle; a hundred times I have heard thee wish it.'

'Ay,' said De Bracy, 'but that was, as thou sayest, hand to hand, and in the ranks of battle! Thou never heardest me breathe a thought of assaulting him alone, and in a forest.'

'Thou art no good knight if thou dost scruple at it,' said Waldemar. 'Was it in battle that Lancelot de Lac and Sir Tristram won renown? or was it not by encountering gigantic knights under the shade of deep and unknown forests?'

'Ay, but I promise you,' said De Bracy, 'that neither Tristram nor Lancelot would have been match, hand to hand, for Richard Plantagenet, and I think it was not their wont to take odds against a single man.'

'Thou art mad, De Bracy: what is it we propose to thee, a hired and retained captain of Free Companions, whose swords are purchased for Prince John's service? Thou art apprised of our enemy, and then thou scruplest, though thy patron's fortunes, those of thy comrades, thine own, and the life and honour of every one amongst us, are at stake!'

'I tell you,' said De Bracy, sullenly, 'that he gave me my life. True, he sent me from his presence, and refused my homage, so far I owe him neither favour nor allegiance; but I will not lift hand against him.'

'It needs not; send Louis Winkelbrand and a score of thy lancea.'

'Ye have sufficient ruffians of your own,' said De Bracy; 'not one of mine shall budge on such an errand.'

'Art thou so obstinate, De Bracy?' said Prince John; 'and wilt thou forsake me, after so many protestations of zeal for my service?'

'I mean it not,' said De Bracy; 'I will abide by you in aught that becomes a knight, whether in the lists or in the camp; but this highway practice comes not within my vow.'

'Come hither, Waldemar,' said Prince John. 'An unhappy prince am I. My father, King Henry, had faithful servants. He had but to say that he was plagued with a factious priest, and the blood of Thomas-a-Becket, saint though he was, stained the steps of his own altar. Tracy, Morville, Brito,¹ loyal

¹ See *Slayers of Becket*. Note 23.

and daring subjects, your names, your spirit, are extinct ! and although Reginald Fitzurse hath left a son, he has fallen off from his father's fidelity and courage.'

'He has fallen off from neither,' said Waldemar Fitzurse, 'and since it may not better be, I will take on me the conduct of this perilous enterprise. Dearly, however, did my father purchase the praise of a zealous friend ; and yet did his proof of loyalty to Henry fall far short of what I am about to afford ; for rather would I assail a whole calendar of saints than put spear in rest against Cœur-de-Lion. De Bracy, to thee I must trust to keep up the spirits of the doubtful, and to guard Prince John's person. If you receive such news as I trust to send you, our enterprise will no longer wear a doubtful aspect. Page, he said, 'hie to my lodgings, and tell my armourer to be there in readiness ; and bid Stephen Wetheral, Broad Thoresby, and the Three Spears of Spyinghow come to me instantly ; and let the scout-master, Hugh Bardon, attend me also. Adieu, my Prince, till better times.' Thus speaking, he left the apartment.

'He goes to make my brother prisoner,' said Prince John to De Bracy, 'with as little touch of compunction as if it but concerned the liberty of a Saxon franklin. I trust he will observe our orders, and use our dear Richard's person with all due respect.'

De Bracy only answered by a smile.

'By the light of Our Lady's brow,' said Prince John, 'our orders to him were most precise, though it may be you heard them not, as we stood together in the oriel window. Most clear and positive was our charge that Richard's safety should be cared for, and woe to Waldemar's head if he transgress it !'

'I had better pass to his lodgings,' said De Bracy, 'and make him fully aware of your Grace's pleasure ; for, as it quite escaped my ear, it may not perchance have reached that of Waldemar.'

'Nay, nay,' said Prince John, impatiently, 'I promise thee he heard me ; and, besides, I have farther occupation for thee. Maurice, come hither ; let me lean on thy shoulder.'

They walked a turn through the hall in this familiar posture, and Prince John, with an air of the most confidential intimacy, proceeded to say, 'What thinkest thou of this Waldemar Fitzurse, my De Bracy ? He trusts to be our Chancellor. Surely we will pause ere we give an office so high to one who shows evidently how little he reverences our blood, by his so readily

undertaking this enterprise against Richard. Thou dost think, I warrant, that thou hast lost somewhat of our regard by thy boldly declining this unpleasant task. But no, Maurice! I rather honour thee for thy virtuous constancy. There are things most necessary to be done, the perpetrator of which we neither love nor honour; and there may be refusals to serve us which shall rather exalt in our estimation those who deny our request. The arrest of my unfortunate brother forms no such good title to the high office of Chancellor as thy chivalrous and courageous denial establishes in thee to the truncheon of High Marshal. Think of this, De Bracy, and begone to thy charge.'

'Fickle tyrant!' muttered De Bracy, as he left the presence of the Prince; 'evil luck have they who trust thee. Thy Chancellor, indeed! He who hath the keeping of thy conscience shall have an easy charge, I trow. But High Marshal of England! that,' he said, extending his arm, as if to grasp the baton of office, and assuming a loftier stride along the ante-chamber — 'that is indeed a prize worth playing for!'

De Bracy had no sooner left the apartment than Prince John summoned an attendant.

'Bid Hugh Bardon, our scout-master, come hither, as soon as he shall have spoken with Waldemar Fitzurse.'

The scout-master arrived after a brief delay, during which John traversed the apartment with unequal and disordered steps.

'Bardon,' said he, 'what did Waldemar desire of thee?'

'Two resolute men, well acquainted with these northern wilds, and skilful in tracking the tread of man and horse.'

'And thou hast fitted him?'

'Let your Grace never trust me else,' answered the master of the spies. 'One is from Hexhamshire; he is wont to trace the Tynedale and Teviotdale thieves, as a bloodhound follows the scent of a hurt deer. The other is Yorkshire bred, and has twanged his bowstring right oft in merry Sherwood; he knows each glade and dingle, copse and high-wood, betwixt this and Richmond.'

'Tis well,' said the Prince. 'Goes Waldemar forth with them?'

'Instantly,' said Bardon.

'With what attendance?' asked John, carelessly.

'Broad Thoresby goes with him, and Wetherall, whom they call, for his cruelty, Stephen Steel-Heart; and three northern

men-at-arms that belonged to Ralph Middleton's gang; they are called the Spears of Spyinghow.'

'Tis well,' said Prince John; then added, after a moment's pause, 'Bardon, it imports our service that thou keep a strict watch on Maurice de Bracy, so that he shall not observe it, however. And let us know of his motions from time to time, with whom he converses, what he proposeth. Fail not in this, as thou wilt be answerable.'

Hugh Bardon bowed, and retired.

'If Maurice betrays me,' said Prince John — 'if he betrays me, as his bearing leads me to fear, I will have his head, were Richard thundering at the gates of York.'

CHAPTER XXXV

Arouse the tiger of Hyrcanian deserts,
Strive with the half-starved lion for his prey;
Lesser the risk, than rouse the slumbering fire
Of wild fanaticism.

Anonymous.

OUR tale now returns to Isaac of York. Mounted upon a mule, the gift of the outlaw, with two tall yeomen to act as his guard and guides, the Jew had set out for the preceptory of Templestowe, for the purpose of negotiating his daughter's redemption. The preceptory was but a day's journey from the demolished castle of Torquilstone, and the Jew had hoped to reach it before nightfall; accordingly, having dismissed his guides at the verge of the forest, and rewarded them with a piece of silver, he began to press on with such speed as his weariness permitted him to exert. But his strength failed him totally ere he had reached within four miles of the Temple court; racking pains shot along his back and through his limbs, and the excessive anguish which he felt at heart being now augmented by bodily suffering, he was rendered altogether incapable of proceeding farther than a small market-town, where dwelt a Jewish rabbi of his tribe, eminent in the medical profession, and to whom Isaac was well known. Nathan ben Israel received his suffering countryman with that kindness which the law prescribed, and which the Jews practised to each other. He insisted on his betaking himself to repose, and used such remedies as were then in most repute to check the progress of the fever which terror, fatigue, ill-usage, and sorrow had brought upon the poor old Jew.

On the morrow, when Isaac proposed to arise and pursue his journey, Nathan remonstrated against his purpose, both as his host and as his physician. 'It might cost him,' he said, 'his life.' But Isaac replied, 'That more than life and death depended upon his going that morning to Templestowe.'

'To Templestowe!' said his host with surprise; again felt his pulse, and then muttered to himself, 'His fever is abated, yet seems his mind somewhat alienated and disturbed.'

'And why not to Templestowe?' answered his patient. 'I grant thee, Nathan, that it is a dwelling of those to whom the despised Children of the Promise are a stumbling-block and an abomination; yet thou knowest that pressing affairs of traffic sometimes carry us among these bloodthirsty Nazarene soldiers, and that we visit the preceptories of the Templars, as well as the commanderies of the Knights Hospitallers, as they are called.'¹

'I know it well,' said Nathan; 'but wottest thou that Lucas de Beaumanoir, the chief of their order, and whom they term Grand Master, is now himself at Templestowe?'

'I know it not,' said Isaac; 'our last letters from our brethren at Paris avised us that he was at that city, beseeching Philip for aid against the Sultan Saladine.'

'He hath since come to England, unexpected by his brethren,' said Ben Israel; 'and he cometh among them with a strong and outstretched arm to correct and to punish. His countenance is kindled in anger against those who have departed from the vow which they have made, and great is the fear of those sons of Belial. Thou must have heard of his name?'

'It is well known unto me,' said Isaac: 'the Gentiles deliver this Lucas Beaumanoir as a man zealous to slaying for every point of the Nazarene law; and our brethren have termed him a fierce destroyer of the Saracens, and a cruel tyrant to the Children of the Promise.'

'And truly have they termed him,' said Nathan the physician. 'Other Templars may be moved from the purpose of their heart by pleasure, or bribed by promise of gold and silver; but Beaumanoir is of a different stamp — hating sensuality, despising treasure, and pressing forward to that which they call the crown of martyrdom — the God of Jacob speedily send it unto him, and unto them all! Specially hath this proud man extended his glove over the children of Judah, as holy David over Edom, holding the murder of a Jew to be an offering of as sweet savour as the death of a Saracen. Impious and false things has he said even of the virtues of our medicines, as if they were the devices of Satan — the Lord rebuke him!'

'Nevertheless,' said Isaac, 'I must present myself at Temple-

¹ See Note 24.

stowe, though he hath made his face like unto a fiery furnace seven times heated.'

He then explained to Nathan the pressing cause of his journey. The Rabbi listened with interest, and testified his sympathy after the fashion of his people, rending his clothes, and saying, 'Ah, my daughter! — ah, my daughter! Alas! for the beauty of Zion! Alas! for the captivity of Israel!'

'Thou seest,' said Isaac, 'how it stands with me, and that I may not tarry. Peradventure, the presence of this Lucas Beaumanoir, being the chief man over them, may turn Brian de Bois-Guilbert from the ill which he doth meditate, and that he may deliver to me my beloved daughter Rebecca.'

'Go thou,' said Nathan ben Israel, 'and be wise, for wisdom availed Daniel in the den of lions into which he was cast; and may it go well with thee, even as thine heart wisheth. Yet, if thou canst, keep thee from the presence of the Grand Master, for to do foul scorn to our people is his morning and evening delight. It may be, if thou couldst speak with Bois-Guilbert in private, thou shalt the better prevail with him; for men say that these accursed Nazarenes are not of one mind in the preceptory — may their counsels be confounded and brought to shame! But do thou, brother, return to me as if it were to the house of thy father, and bring me word how it has sped with thee; and well do I hope thou wilt bring with thee Rebecca, even the scholar of the wise Miriam, whose cures the Gentiles slandered as if they had been wrought by necromancy.'

Isaac accordingly bade his friend farewell, and about an hour's riding brought him before the preceptory of Templestowe.

This establishment of the Templars was seated amidst fair meadows and pastures, which the devotion of the former preceptor had bestowed upon their order. It was strong and well fortified, a point never neglected by these knights, and which the disordered state of England rendered peculiarly necessary. Two halberdiers, clad in black, guarded the drawbridge, and others, in the same sad livery, glided to and fro upon the wall with a funeral pace, resembling spectres more than soldiers. The inferior officers of the order were thus dressed, ever since their use of white garments, similar to those of the knights and esquires, had given rise to a combination of certain false brethren in the mountains of Palestine, terming themselves Templars, and bringing great dishonour on the order. A knight was now and then seen to cross the court in his long white cloak, his head depressed on his breast, and his

arms folded. They passed each other, if they chanced to meet, with a slow, solemn, and mute greeting; for such was the rule of their order, quoting thereupon the holy texts, 'In many words thou shalt not avoid sin,' and 'Life and death are in the power of the tongue.' In a word, the stern, ascetic rigour of the Temple discipline, which had been so long exchanged for prodigal and licentious indulgence, seemed at once to have revived at Templestowe under the severe eye of Lucas Beaumanoir.

Isaac paused at the gate, to consider how he might seek entrance in the manner most likely to bespeak favour; for he was well aware that to his unhappy race the reviving fanaticism of the order was not less dangerous than their unprincipled licentiousness; and that his religion would be the object of hate and persecution in the one case, as his wealth would have exposed him in the other to the extortions of unrelenting oppression.

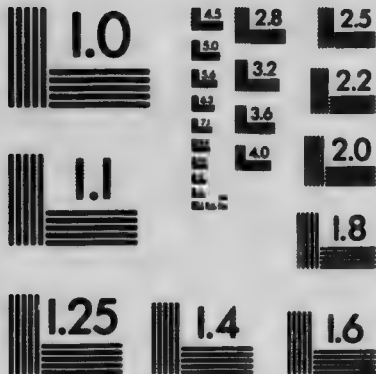
Meantime, Lucas Beaumanoir walked in a small garden belonging to the preceptory, included within the precincts of its exterior fortification, and held sad and confidential communication with a brother of his order, who had come in his company from Palestine.

The Grand Master was a man advanced in age, as was testified by his long grey beard, and the shaggy grey eyebrows, overhanging eyes of which, however, years had been unable to quench the fire. A formidable warrior, his thin and severe features retained the soldier's fierceness of expression; an ascetic bigot, they were no less marked by the emaciation of abstinence, and the spiritual pride of the self-satisfied devotee. Yet with these severer traits of physiognomy, there was mixed somewhat striking and noble, arising, doubtless, from the great part which his high office called upon him to act among monarchs and princes, and from the habitual exercise of supreme authority over the valiant and high-born knights who were united by the rules of the order. His stature was tall, and his gait, undepressed by age and toil, was erect and stately. His white mantle was shaped with severe regularity, according to the rule of St. Bernard himself, being composed of what was then called burrel cloth, exactly fitted to the size of the wearer, and bearing on the left shoulder the octangular cross peculiar to the order, formed of red cloth. No vair or ermine decked this garment; but in respect of his age, the Grand Master, as permitted by the rules, wore his doublet lined and trimmed



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with the softest lambskin, dressed with the wool outwards, which was the nearest approach he could regularly make to the use of fur, then the greatest luxury of dress. In his hand he bore that singular abacus, or staff of office, with which Templars are usually represented, having at the upper end a round plate, on which was engraved the cross of the order, inscribed within a circle or orle, as heralds term it. His companion, who attended on this great personage, had nearly the same dress in all respects, but his extreme deference towards his superior showed that no other equality subsisted between them. The preceptor, for such he was in rank, walked not in a line with the Grand Master, but just so far behind that Beaumanoir could speak to him without turning round his head.

'Conrade,' said the Grand Master, 'dear companion of my battles and my toils, to thy faithful bosom alone I can confide my sorrows. To thee alone can I tell how oft, since I came to this kingdom, I have desired to be dissolved and to be with the just. Not one object in England hath met mine eye which it could rest upon with pleasure, save the tombs of our brethren, beneath the massive roof of our Temple Church in yonder proud capital. "O, valiant Robert de Ros!" did I exclaim internally, as I gazed upon these good soldiers of the cross, where they lie sculptured on their sepulchres — "O, worthy William de Mareschal! open your marble cells, and take to your repose a weary brother, who would rather strive with a hundred thousand pagans than witness the decay of our holy order!"'

'It is but true,' answered Conrade Mont-Fitchet — 'it is but too true; and the irregularities of our brethren in England are even more gross than those in France.'

'Because they are more wealthy,' answered the Grand Master. 'Bear with me, brother, although I should something vaunt myself. Thou knowest the life I have led, keeping each point of my order, striving with devils embodied and disembodied, striking down the roaring lion, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour, like a good knight and devout priest, wheresoever I met with him, even as blessed St. Bernard hath prescribed to us in the forty-fifth capital of our rule, *Ut leo semper feriatur*.'¹ But, by the Holy Temple! the zeal which hath devoured my substance and my life, yea, the very nerves and marrow of my bones — by that very Holy Temple I swear to thee, that save thyself and some few that still retain the ancient severity of our order, I look upon no brethren whom I can bring my

¹ See Note 25.

soul to embrace under that holy name. What say our statutes, and how do our brethren observe them? They should wear no vain or worldly ornament, no crest upon their helmet, no gold upon stirrup or bridle-bit; yet who now go pranked out so proudly and so gaily as the poor soldiers of the Temple? They are forbidden by our statutes to take one bird by means of another, to shoot beasts with bow or arblast, to halloo to a hunting-horn, or to spur the horse after game; but now, at hunting and hawking, and each idle sport of wood and river, who so prompt as the Templars in all these fond vanities? They are forbidden to read, save what their superior permitted, or listen to what is read, save such holy things as may be recited aloud during the hours of refection; but lo! their ears are at the command of idle minstrels, and their eyes study empty romaunts. They were commanded to extirpate magic and heresy; lo! they are charged with studying the accursed cabalistical secrets of the Jews, and the magic of the paynim Saracens. Simplesness of diet was prescribed to them — roots, pottage, gruels, eating flesh but thrice a-week, because the accustomed feeding on flesh is a dishonourable corruption of the body; and behold, their tables groan under delicate fare. Their drink was to be water; and now, to drink like a Templar is the boast of each jolly boon companion. This very garden, filled as it is with curious herbs and trees sent from the Eastern climes, better becomes the harem of an unbelieving emir than the plot which Christian monks should devote to raise their homely pot-herbs. And O, Conrade! well it were that the relaxation of discipline stopped even here! Well thou knowest that we were forbidden to receive those devout women who at the beginning were associated as sisters of our order, because, saith the forty-sixth chapter, the Ancient Enemy hath, by female society, withdrawn many from the right path to paradise. Nay, in the last capital, being, as it were, the copestone which our blessed founder placed on the pure and undefiled doctrine which he had enjoined, we are prohibited from offering, even to our sisters and our mothers, the kiss of affection: *ut omnium mulierum fugiantur oscula*. I shame to speak — I shame to think — of the corruptions which have rushed in upon us even like a flood. The souls of our pure founders, the spirits of Hugh de Payen and Godfrey de St. Omer, and of the blessed seven who first joined in dedicating their lives to the service of the Temple, are disturbed even in the enjoyment of paradise itself. I have seen them, Conrade, in the visions of the night: their sainted

eyes shed tears for the sins and follies of their brethren, and for the foul and shameful luxury in which they wallow. "Beaumanoir," they say, "thou slumberest; awake! There is a stain in the fabric of the Temple, deep and foul as that left by the streaks of leprosy on the walls of the infected houses of old." The soldiers of the Cross, who should shun the glance of a woman as the eye of a basilisk, live in open sin, not with the females of their own race only, but with the daughters of the accursed heathen, and more accursed Jew. Beaumanoir, thou sleepest; up, and avenge our cause! Slay the sinners, male and female! Take to thee the brand of Phineas!" The vision fled, Conrade, but as I awaked I could still hear the clank of their mail, and see the waving of their white mantles. And I will do according to their word: I will purify the fabric of the Temple; and the unclean stones in which the plague is, I will remove and cast out of the building.

'Yet bethink thee, reverend father,' said Mont-Fitchet, 'the stain hath become engrained by time and consuetude; let thy reformation be cautious, as it is just and wise.'

'No, Mont-Fitchet,' answered the stern old man, 'it must be sharp and sudden; the order is on the crisis of its fate. The sobriety, self-devotion, and piety of our predecessors made us powerful friends; our presumption, our wealth, our luxury have raised up against us mighty enemies. We must cast away these riches, which are a temptation to princes; we must lay down that presumption, which is an offence to them; we must reform that license of manners, which is a scandal to the whole Christian world! Or—mark my words—the order of the Temple will be utterly demolished, and the place thereof shall no more be known among the nations.'

'Now may God avert such a calamity!' said the preceptor.

'Amen,' said the Grand Master, with solemnity, 'but we must deserve His aid. I tell thee, Conrade, that neither the powers in Heaven, nor the powers on earth, will longer endure the wickedness of this generation. My intelligence is sure—the ground on which our fabric is reared is already undermined, and each addition we make to the structure of our greatness will only sink it the sooner in the abyss. We must retrace our steps and show ourselves the faithful champions of the Cross, sacrificing to our calling not alone our blood and our lives, not alone our lusts and our vices, but our ease, our comforts, and our natural affections, and—as men convinced

¹ See the 13th chapter of Leviticus.

that many a pleasure which may be lawful to others is forbidden to the vowed soldier of the Temple.'

At this moment a squire, clothed in a threadbare vestment — for the aspirants after this holy order wore during their noviciate the cast-off garments of the knights — entered the garden, and, bowing profoundly before the Grand Master, stood silent, awaiting his permission ere he presumed to tell his errand.

'Is it not more seemly,' said the Grand Master, 'to see this Damian, clothed in the garments of Christian humility, thus appear with reverend silence before his superior, than but two days since, when the fond fool was decked in a painted coat, and jangling as pert and as proud as any popinjay? Speak, Damian, we permit thee. What is thine errand?'

'A Jew stands without the gate, noble and reverend father,' said the squire, 'who prays to speak with brother Brian de Bois-Guilbert.'

'Thou wert right to give me knowledge of it,' said the Grand Master; 'in our presence a preceptor is but as a common compeer of our order, who may not walk according to his own will, but to that of his Master, even according to the text, "In the hearing of the ear he hath obeyed me." It imports us especially to know of this Bois-Guilbert's proceedings,' said he, turning to his companion.

'Report speaks him brave and valiant,' said Conrade.

'And truly is he so spoken of,' said the Grand Master; 'in our valour only we are not degenerated from our predecessors, the heroes of the Cross. But brother Brian came into our order a moody and disappointed man, stirred, I doubt me, to take our vows and to renounce the world, not in sincerity of soul, but as one whom some touch of light discontent had driven into penitence. Since then he hath become an active and earnest agitator, a murmurer, and a machinator, and a leader amongst those who impugn our authority; not considering that the rule is given to the Master even by the symbol of the staff and the rod — the staff to support the infirmities of the weak, the rod to correct the faults of delinquents. Damian,' he continued, 'lead the Jew to our presence.'

The squire departed with a profound reverence, and in a few minutes returned, marshalling in Isaac of York. No naked slave, ushered into the presence of some mighty prince, could approach his judgment-seat with more profound reverence and terror than that with which the Jew drew near to the presence

of the Grand Master. When he had approached within the distance of three yards, Beaumanoir made a sign with his staff that he should come no farther. The Jew kneeled down on the earth, which he kissed in token of reverence; then rising, stood before the Templars, his hands folded on his bosom, his head bowed on his breast, in all the submission of Oriental slavery.

'Damian,' said the Grand Master, 'retire, and have a guard ready to await our sudden call; and suffer no one to enter the garden until we shall leave it.' The squire bowed and retreated. 'Jew,' continued the haughty old man, 'mark me. It suits not our condition to hold with thee long communication, nor do we waste words or time upon any one. Wherefore be brief in thy answers to what questions I shall ask thee, and let thy words be of truth; for if thy tongue doubles with me, I will have it torn from thy misbelieving jaws.'

The Jew was about to reply; but the Grand Master went on —

'Peace, unbeliever! not a word in our presence, save in answer to our questions. What is thy business with our brother Brian de Bois-Guilbert?'

Isaac gasped with terror and uncertainty. To tell his tale might be interpreted into scandalising the order; yet, unless he told it, what hope could he have of achieving his daughter's deliverance? Beaumanoir saw his mortal apprehension, and condescended to give him some assurance.

'Fear nothing,' he said, 'for thy wretched person, Jew, so thou dealest uprightly in this matter. I demand again to know from thee thy business with Brian de Bois-Guilbert?'

'I am bearer of a letter,' stammered out the Jew, 'so please your reverend valour, to that good knight, from Prior Aymer of the Abbey of Jorvaulx.'

'Said I not these were evil times, Conrade?' said the Master. 'A Cistercian prior sends a letter to a soldier of the Temple, and can find no more fitting messenger than an unbelieving Jew. Give me the letter.'

The Jew, with trembling hands, undid the folds of his Armenian cap, in which he had deposited the Prior's tablets for the greater security, and was about to approach, with hand extended and body crouched, to place it within the reach of his grim interrogator.

'Back, dog!' said the Grand Master; 'I touch not misbelievers, save with the sword. Conrade, take thou the letter from the Jew and give it to me.'

Beaumanoir, being thus possessed of the tablets, inspected the outside carefully, and then proceeded to undo the packthread which secured its folds. 'Reverend father,' said Conrade, interposing, though with much deference, 'wilt thou break the seal?'

'And will I not?' said Beaumanoir, with a frown. 'Is it not written in the forty-second capital, *De Lectione Literarum*, that a Templar shall not receive a letter, no not from his father, without communicating the same to the Grand Master, and reading it in his presence?'

He then perused the letter in haste, with an expression of surprise and horror; read it over again more slowly; then holding it out to Conrade with one hand, and slightly striking it with the other, exclaimed — 'Here is goodly stuff for one Christian man to write to another, and both members, and no inconsiderable members, of religious professions! When,' said he solemnly, and looking upward, 'wilt Thou come with Thy fanners to purge the thrashing-floor?'

Mont-Fitchet took the letter from his superior, and was about to peruse it. 'Read it aloud, Conrade,' said the Grand Master; 'and do thou (to Isaac) attend to the purport of it, for we will question thee concerning it.'

Conrade read the letter, which was in these words: 'Aymer, by divine grace, prior of the Cistercian house of St. Mary's of Jorvaulx, to Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, a knight of the holy order of the Temple, wisheth health, with the bounties of King Bacchus and of my Lady Venus. Touching our present condition, dear brother, we are a captive in the hands of certain lawless and godless men, who have not feared to detain our person, and put us to ransom; whereby we have also learned of Front-de-Bœuf's misfortune, and that thou hast escaped with that fair Jewish sorceress whose black eyes have bewitched thee. We are heartily rejoiced of thy safety; nevertheless, we pray thee to be on thy guard in the matter of this second Witch of Endor; for we are privately assured that your Great Master, who careth not a bean for cherry cheeks and black eyes, comes from Normandy to diminish your mirth and amend your misdoings. Wherefore we pray you heartily to beware, and to be found watching, even as the Holy Text hath it, *Invenientur vigilantes*. And the wealthy Jew her father, Isaac of York, having prayed of me letters in his behalf, I gave him these, earnestly advising, and in a sort entreating, that you do hold the damse' to ransom, seeing he will pay you from his bags as

much as may find fifty damsels upon safer terms, whereof I trust to have my part when we make merry together, as true brothers, not forgetting the wine-cup. For what saith the text, *Vinum letificat cor hominis*; and again, *Rex delectabitur pulchritudine tua*.

'Till which merry meeting, we wish you farewell. Given from this den of thieves, about the hour of matins,

AYMER PR. S. M. JORVOLCIENCIS.

'*Postscriptum*. — Truly your golden chain hath not long abidden with me, and will now sustain, around the neck of an outlaw deer-stealer, the whistle wherewith he calleth on his hounds.'

'What sayest thou to this, Conrade?' said the Grand Master. 'Den of thieves! and a fit residence is a den of thieves for such a prior. No wonder that the hand of God is upon us, and that in the Holy Land we lose place by place, foot by foot, before the infidels, when we have such churchmen as this Aymer. And what meaneth he, I trow, by "this second Witch of Endor"?' said he to his confidant, something apart.

Conrade was better acquainted, perhaps by practice, with the jargon of gallantry than was his superior; and he expounded the passage which embarrassed the Grand Master to be a sort of language used by worldly men towards those whom they loved *par amours*; but the explanation did not satisfy the bigoted Beaumanoir.

'There is more in it than thou dost guess, Conrade; thy simplicity is no match for this deep abyss of wickedness. This Rebecca of York was a pupil of that Miriam of whom thou hast heard. Thou shalt hear the Jew own it even now.' Then turning to Isaac, he said aloud, 'Thy daughter, then, a prisoner with Brian de Bois-Guilbert?'

'Ay, reverend valorous sir,' stammered poor Rebecca, 'and whatsoever ransom a poor man may pay for her deliverance.'

'Peace!' said the Grand Master. 'This gentlewoman hath practised the art of healing, hath she not?'

'Ay, gracious sir,' answered the Jew, with more confidence; 'and knight and yeoman, squire and vassal, may bless the goodly gift which Heaven hath assigned to her. Many a one can testify that she hath recovered them by her art, when every other human aid hath proved vain; but the blessing of the God of Jacob was upon her.'

Beaumanoir turned to Mont-Fitchet with a grim smile. 'See, brother,' he said, 'the deceptions of the devouring Enemy! Behold the baits with which he fishes for souls, giving a poor space of earthly life in exchange for eternal happiness hereafter. Well said our blessed rule, *Semper percutiatur leo vorans*. Up on the lion! Down with the destroyer!' said he, shaking aloft his mystic abacus, as if in defiance of the powers of darkness. 'Thy daughter worketh the cures, I doubt not,' thus he went on to address the Jew, 'by words and sigils, and periapts, and other cabalistical mysteries.'

'Nay, reverend and brave knight,' answered Isaac, 'but in chief measure by a balsam of marvellous virtue.'

'Where had she that secret?' said Beaumanoir.

'It was delivered to her,' answered Isaac, reluctantly, 'by Miriam, a sage matron of our tribe.'

'Ah, false Jew!' said the Grand Master; 'was it not from that same witch Miriam, the abomination of whose enchantments have been heard of throughout every Christian land?' exclaimed the Grand Master, crossing himself. 'Her body was burnt at a stake, and her ashes were scattered to the four winds; and so be it with me and mine order, if I do not as much to her pupil, and more also! I will teach her to throw spell and incantation over the soldiers of the blessed Temple! There, Damian, spurn this Jew from the gate; shoot him dead if he oppose or turn again. With his daughter we will deal as the Christian law and our own high office warrant.'

Poor Isaac was hurried off accordingly, and expelled from the preceptory, all his entreaties, and even his offers, unheard and disregarded. He could do no better than return to the house of the Rabbi, and endeavour, through his means, to learn how his daughter was to be disposed of. He had hitherto feared for her honour; he was now to tremble for her life. Meanwhile, the Grand Master ordered to his presence the preceptor of Templestowe.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Say not my art is fraud ; all live by seeming.
The beggar begs with it, and the gay courtier
Gains land and title, rank and rule, by seeming ;
The clergy scorn it not ; and the bold soldier
Will eke with it his service. All admit it,
All practice it ; and he who is content
With showing what he is shall have small credit
In church, or camp, or state. So wags the world.

Old Play.

ALBERT MALVOISIN, president, or, in the language of the order, preceptor of the establishment of Templestowe, was brother to that Philip Malvoisin who has been already occasionally mentioned in this history, and was, like that baron, in close league with Brian de Bois-Guilbert.

Among dissolute and unprincipled men, of whom the Temple order include, but too many, Albert of Templestowe might be distinguished ; but with this difference from the audacious Bois-Guilbert, that he knew how to throw over his vices and his ambition the veil of hypocrisy, and to assume in his exterior the fanaticism which he internally despised. Had not the arrival of the Grand Master been so unexpectedly sudden, he would have seen nothing at Templestowe which might have appeared to argue any relaxation of discipline. And, even although surprised, and to a certain extent detected, Albert Malvoisin listened with such respect and apparent contrition to the rebuke of his superior, and made such haste to reform the particulars he censured — succeeded, in fine, so well in giving an air of ascetic devotion to a family which had been lately devoted to license and pleasure, that Lucas Beaumanoir began to entertain a higher opinion of the preceptor's morals than the first appearance of the establishment had inclined him to adopt.

But these favourable sentiments on the part of the Grand Master were greatly shaken by the intelligence that Albert

had received within a house of religion the Jewish captive, and, as was to be feared, the paramour of a brother of the order; and when Albert appeared before him he was regarded with unwonted sternness.

'There is in this mansion, dedicated to the purposes of the holy order of the Temple,' said the Grand Master, in a severe tone, 'a Jewish woman, brought hither by a brother of religion, by your connivance, Sir Preceptor.'

Albert Malvoisin was overwhelmed with confusion; for the unfortunate Rebecca had been confined in a remote and secret part of the building, and every precaution used to prevent her residence there from being known. He read in the looks of Beaumanoir ruin to Bois-Guilbert and to himself, unless he should be able to avert the impending storm.

'Why are you mute?' continued the Grand Master.

'Is it permitted to me to reply?' answered the preceptor, in a tone of the deepest humility, although by the question he only meant to gain an instant's space for arranging his ideas.

'Speak, you are permitted,' said the Grand Master — 'speak, and say, knowest thou the capital of our holy rule — *De commilitonibus Templi in sancta civitate, qui cum miserrimis mulieribus versantur, propter oblectationem carnis?*'¹

'Surely, most reverend father,' answered the preceptor, 'I have not risen to this office in the order, being ignorant of one of its most important prohibitions.'

'How comes it, then, I demand of thee once more, that thou hast suffered a brother to bring a paramour, and that paramour a Jewish sorceress, into this holy place, to the stain and pollution thereof?'

'A Jewish sorceress!' echoed Albert Malvoisin, 'good angels guard us!'

'Ay, brother, a Jewish sorceress,' said the Grand Master, sternly. 'I have said it. Darest thou deny that this Rebecca, the daughter of that wretched usurer Isaac of York, and the pupil of the foul witch Miriam, is now — shame to be thought or spoken! — lodged within this thy preceptory?'

'Your wisdom, reverend father,' answered the preceptor, 'hath rolled away the darkness from my understanding. Much did I wonder that so good a knight as Brian de Bois-Guilbert seemed so fondly besotted on the charms of this female, whom I received into this house merely to place a bar betwixt their

¹ The edict which he quotes is against communion with women of light character.

growing intimacy, which else might have been cemented at the expense of the fall of our valiant and religious brother.'

'Hath nothing, then, as yet passed betwixt them in breach of his vow?' demanded the Grand Master.

'What! under this roof?' said the preceptor, crossing himself; 'St. Magdalene and the ten thousand virgins forbid! No! if I have sinned in receiving her here, it was in the erring thought that I might thus break off our brother's besotted devotion to this Jewess, which seemed to me so wild and unnatural, that I could not but ascribe it to some touch of insanity, more to be cured by pity than reproof. But, since your reverend wisdom hath discovered this Jewish quean to be a sorceress, perchance it may account fully for his enamoured folly.'

'It doth! — it doth!' said Beaumanoir. 'See, brother Conrade, the peril of yielding to the first devices and blandishments of Satan! We look upon woman only to gratify the lust of the eye, and to take pleasure in what men call her beauty; and the Ancient Enemy, the devouring lion, obtains power over us, to complete, by talisman and spell, a work which was begun by idleness and folly. It may be that our brother Bois-Guilbert does in this matter deserve rather pity than severe chastisement, rather the support of the staff than the strokes of the rod; and that our admonitions and prayers may turn him from his folly, and restore him to his brethren.'

'It were deep pity,' said Conrade Mont-Fitchet, 'to lose to the order one of its best lances, when the holy community most requires the aid of its sons. Three hundred Saracens hath this Brian de Bois-Guilbert slain with his own hand.'

The blood of these accursed dogs,' said the Grand Master, 'shall be a sweet and acceptable offering to the saints and angels whom they despise and blaspheme; and with their aid will we counteract the spells and charms with which our brother is entwined as in a net. He shall burst the bands of this Delilah as Samson burst the two new cords with which the Philistines had bound him, and shall slaughter the infidels, even heaps upon heaps. But concerning this foul witch, who hath flung her enchantments over a brother of the Holy Temple, assuredly she shall die the death.'

'But the laws of England ——' said the preceptor, who, though delighted that the Grand Master's resentment, thus fortunately averted from himself and Bois-Guilbert, had taken another direction, began now to fear he was carrying it too far.

'The laws of England,' interrupted Beaumanoir, 'permit and enjoin each judge to execute justice within his own jurisdiction. The most petty baron may arrest, try, and condemn a witch found within his own domain. And shall that power be denied to the Grand Master of the Temple within a preceptory of his order? No! we will judge and condemn. The witch shall be taken out of the land, and the wickedness thereof shall be forgiven. Prepare the castle hall for the trial of the sorceress.'

Albert Malvoisin bowed and retired, not to give directions for preparing the hall, but to seek out Brian de Bois-Guilbert, and communicate to him how matters were likely to terminate. It was not long ere he found him, foaming with indignation at a repulse he had anew sustained from the fair Jewess. 'The unthinking,' he said — 'the ungrateful, to scorn him who, amidst blood and flames, would have saved her at the risk of his own! By Heaven, Malvoisin! I abode under the joist and rafters crackled and crashed around me. I was the butt of a hundred arrows; they rattled on mine armour like hailstones against a latticed casement, and the only use I made of my shield was for her protection. This did I endure for her; and now the self-willed girl upbraids me that I did not leave her to perish, and refuses me not only the slightest proof of gratitude, but even the most distant hope that ever she will be brought to grant any. The devil, that possessed her race with obstinacy, has concentrated its full force in her single person!'

'The devil,' said the preceptor, 'I think, possessed you both. How oft have I preached to you caution, if not continence? Did I not tell you that there were enough willing Christian damsels to be met with, who would think it sin to refuse so brave a knight *le don d'amourer* : *merci*, and you must needs anchor affection on a wilful, chaste Jewess! By the mass, I think old Lucas Beaumanoir guesses right, when he maintains she hath cast a spell over you.'

'Lucas Beaumanoir!' said Bois-Guilbert, reproachfully 'Are these your precautions. Malvoisin? Hast thou suffered the dotard to learn that Rebecca is in the preceptory?'

'I could I help it?' said the preceptor. 'I neglected nothing that could keep secret your mystery; but it is betrayed, and whether by the devil or no, the devil only can tell. But I have turned the matter as I could; you are safe if you renounce Rebecca. You are pitied — the victim of magical delusion. She is a sorceress, and must suffer as such.'

'She shall not, by Heaven!' said Bois-Guilbert.

'By Heaven, she must and will!' said Malvoisin. 'Neither you nor any one else can save her. Lucas Beaumanoir hath settled that the death of a Jewess will be a sin-offering sufficient to atone for all the amorous indulgences of the Knights Templars; and thou knowest he hath both the power and will to execute so reasonable and pious a purpose.'

'Will future ages believe that such stupid bigotry ever existed!' said Bois-Guilbert, striding up and down the apartment.

'What they may believe, I know not,' said Malvoisin, calmly; 'but I know well, that in this our day clergy and laymen, take ninety-nine to the hundred, will cry "Amen" to the Grand Master's sentence.'

'I have it,' said Bois-Guilbert. 'Albert, thou art my friend. Thou must connive at her escape, Malvoisin, and I will transport her to some place of greater security and secrecy.'

'I cannot, if I would,' replied the preceptor: 'the mansion is filled with the attendants of the Grand Master, and others who are devoted to him. And, to be frank with you, brother, I would not embark with you in this matter, even if I could hope to bring my bark to haven. I have risked enough already for your sake. I have no mind to encounter a sentence of degradation, or even to lose my preceptory, for the sake of a painted piece of Jewish flesh and blood. And you, if you will be guided by my counsel, will give up this wild-goose chase, and fly your hawk at some other game. Think, Bois-Guilbert; thy present rank, thy future honours, all depend on thy place in the order. Shouldst thou adhere perversely to thy passion for this Rebecca, thou wilt give Beaumanoir the power of expelling thee, and he will not neglect it. He is jealous of the truncheon which he holds in his trembling gripe, and he knows thou stretchest thy bold hand towards it. Doubt not he will ruin thee, if thou affordest him a pretext so fair as thy protection of a Jewish sorceress. Give him his scope in this matter, for thou canst not control him. When the staff is in thine own firm grasp, thou mayest caress the daughters of Judah, or burn them, as may best suit thine own humour.'

'Malvoisin,' said Bois-Guilbert, 'thou art a cold-blooded ——'

'Friend,' said the preceptor, hastening to fill up the blank, in which Bois-Guilbert would probably have placed a worse word — 'a cold-blooded friend I am, and therefore more fit to give thee advice. I tell thee once more, that thou canst not save Rebecca. I tell thee once more, thou canst but perish with her. Go hie thee to the Grand Master; throw thyself at his feet and tell him ——'

Not at his feet, by Heaven ! but to the dotard's very beard will I say —

'Say to him, then, to his beard,' continued Malvoisin, coolly, 'that you love this captive Jewess to distraction ; and the more thou dost enlarge on thy passion, the greater will be his haste to end it by the death of the fair enchantress ; while thou, taken in flagrant delict by the avowal of a crime contrary to thine oath, canst hope no aid of thy brethren, and must exchange all thy brilliant visions of ambition and power, to lift perhaps a mercenary spear in some of the petty quarrels between Flanders and Burgundy.'

'Thou speakest the truth, Malvoisin,' said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, after a moment's reflection. 'I will give the hoary bigot no advantage over me ; and for Rebecca, she hath not merited at my hand that I should expose rank and honour for her sake. I will cast her off ; yes, I will leave her to her fate, unless —'

'Qualify not thy wise and necessary resolution,' said Malvoisin ; 'women are but the toys which amuse our lighter hours ; ambition is the serious business of life. Perish a thousand such frail baubles as this Jewess, before thy manly step pause in the brilliant career that lies stretched before thee ! For the present we part, nor must we be seen to hold close conversation ; I must order the hall for his judgment-seat.'

'What !' said Bois-Guilbert, 'so soon ?'

'Ay,' replied the preceptor, 'trial moves rapidly on when the judge has determined the sentence beforehand.'

'Rebecca,' said Bois-Guilbert, when he was left alone, 'thou art like to cost me dear. Why cannot I abandon thee to thy fate, as this calm hypocrite recommends ? One effort will I make to save thee ; but beware of ingratitude ! for, if I am again repulsed, my vengeance shall equal my love. The life and honour of Bois-Guilbert must not be hazarded, where contempt and reproaches are his only reward.'

The preceptor had hardly given the necessary orders, when he was joined by Conrade Mont-Fitchet, who acquainted him with the Grand Master's resolution to bring the Jewess to instant trial for sorcery.

'It is surely a dream,' said the preceptor ; 'we have many Jewish physicians, and we call them not wizards though they work wonderful cures.'

'The Grand Master thinks otherwise,' said Mont-Fitchet ; 'and, Albert, I will be upright with thee : wizard or not, it

were better that this miserable damsel die than that Brian de Bois-Guilbert should be lost to the order, or the order divided by internal dissension. Thou knowest his high rank, his fame in arms; thou knowest the zeal with which many of our brethren regard him; but all this will not avail him with our Grand Master, should he consider Brian as the accomplice, not the victim, of this Jewess. Were the souls of the twelve tribes in her single body, it were better she suffered alone than that Bois-Guilbert were partner in her destruction.'

'I have been working him even now to abandon her,' said Malvoisin; 'but still, are there grounds enough to condemn this Rebecca for sorcery? Will not the Grand Master change his mind when he sees that the proofs are so weak?'

'They must be strengthened, Albert,' replied Mont-Fitchet — 'they must be strengthened. Dost thou understand me?'

'I do,' said the preceptor, 'nor do I scruple to do aught for advancement of the order; but there is little time to find engines fitting.'

'Malvoisin, they *must* be found,' said Conrade; 'well will it advantage both the order and thee. This Templestowe is a poor preceptory; that of Maison-Dieu is worth double its value. Thou knowest my interest with our old chief; find those who can carry this matter through, and thou art preceptor of Maison-Dieu in the fertile Kent. How sayest thou?'

'There is,' replied Malvoisin, 'among those who came hither with Bois-Guilbert, two fellows whom I well know; servants they were to my brother Philip de Malvoisin, and passed from his service to that of Front-de-Bœuf. It may be they know something of the witcheries of this woman.'

'Away, seek them out instantly; and hark thee, if a byzant or two will sharpen their memory, let them not be wanting.'

'They would swear the mother that bore them a sorceress for a zecchin,' said the preceptor.

'Away, then,' said Mont-Fitchet; 'at noon the affair will proceed. I have not seen our senior in such earnest preparation since he condemned to the stake Hamet Alfagi, a convert who relapsed to the Moslem faith.'

Tue ponderous castle-bell had tolled the point of noon, when Rebecca heard a trampling of feet upon the private stair which led to her place of confinement. The noise announced the arrival of several persons, and the circumstance rather gave her joy; for she was more afraid of the solitary visits of the fierce and passionate Bois-Guilbert than of any evil that

could befall her besides. The door of the chamber was unlocked, and Conrade and the preceptor Malvoisin entered, attended by four warders clothed in black, and bearing halberds.

'Daughter of an accursed race!' said the preceptor, 'arise and follow us.'

'Whither,' said Rebecca, 'and for what purpose?'

'Damsel,' answered Conrade, 'it is not for thee to question, but to obey. Nevertheless, be it known to thee, that thou art to be brought before the tribunal of the Grand Master of our holy order, there to answer for thine offences.'

'May the God of Abraham be praised!' said Rebecca, folding her hands devoutly; 'the name of a judge, though an enemy to my people, is to me as the name of a protector. Most willingly do I follow thee; permit me only to wrap my veil around my head.'

They descended the stair with slow and solemn step, traversed a long gallery, and, by a pair of folding-doors placed at the end, entered the great hall in which the Grand Master had for the time established his court of justice.

The lower part of this ample apartment was filled with squires and yeomen, who made way, not without some difficulty, for Rebecca, attended by the preceptor and Mont-Fitchet, and followed by the guard of halberdiers, to move forward to the seat appointed for her. As she passed through the crowd, her arms folded and her head depressed, a scrap of paper was thrust into her hand, which she received almost unconsciously, and continued to hold without examining its contents. The assurance that she possessed some friend in this awful assembly gave her courage to look around, and to mark into whose presence she had been conducted. She gazed, accordingly, upon the scene, which we shall endeavour to describe in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXVII

Stern was the law which bade its vot'ries leave
At human woes with human hearts to grieve ;
Stern was the law, which at the winning wile
Of frank and harmless mirth forbade to smile ;
But sterner still, when high the iron rod
Of tyrant power she shook, and call'd that power of God.

The Middle Ages.

THE tribunal, erected for the trial of the innocent and unhappy Rebecca, occupied the dais or elevated part of the upper end of the great hall—a platform which we have already described as the place of honour, destined to be occupied by the most distinguished inhabitants or guests of an ancient mansion.

On an elevated seat, directly before the accused, sat the Grand Master of the Temple, in full and ample robes of flowing white, holding in his hand the mystic staff which bore the symbol of the order. At his feet was placed a table, occupied by two scribes, chaplains of the order, whose duty it was to reduce to formal record the proceedings of the day. The black dresses, bare scalps, and demure looks of these churchmen formed a strong contrast to the warlike appearance of the knights who attended, either as residing in the preceptory or as come thither to attend upon their Grand Master. The preceptors, of whom there were four present, occupied seats lower in height, and somewhat drawn back behind that of their superior; and the knights who enjoyed no such rank in the order were placed on benches still lower, and preserving the same distance from the preceptors as these from the Grand Master. Behind them, but still upon the dais or elevated portion of the hall, stood the esquires of the order, in white dresses of an inferior quality.

The whole assembly wore an aspect of the most profound gravity; and in the faces of the knights might be perceived traces of military daring, united with the solemn carriage

becoming men of a religious profession, and which, in the presence of their Grand Master, failed not to sit upon every brow.

The remaining and lower part of the hall was filled with guards, holding partizans, and with other attendants whom curiosity had drawn thither to see at once a Grand Master and a Jewish sorceress. By far the greater part of those inferior persons were, in one rank or other, connected with the order, and were accordingly distinguished by their black dresses. But peasants from the neighbouring country were not refused admittance; for it was the pride of Beaumanoir to render the edifying spectacle of the justice which he administered as public as possible. His large blue eyes seemed to expand as he gazed around the assembly, and his countenance appeared elated by the conscious dignity and imaginary merit of the part which he was about to perform. A psalm, which he himself accompanied with a deep mellow voice, which age had not deprived of its powers, commenced the proceedings of the day; and the solemn sounds, *Venite, exultemus Domino*, so often sung by the Templars before engaging with earthly adversaries, was judged by Lucas most appropriate to introduce the approaching triumph, for such he deemed it, over the powers of darkness. The deep prolonged notes, raised by a hundred masculine voices accustomed to combine in the choral chant, arose to the vaulted roof of the hall, and rolled on amongst its arches with the pleasing yet solemn sound of the rushing of mighty waters.

When the sounds ceased, the Grand Master glanced his eye slowly around the circle, and observed that the seat of one of the preceptors was vacant. Brian de Bois-Guilbert, by whom it had been occupied, had left his place, and was now standing near the extreme corner of one of the benches occupied by the knights companions of the Temple, one hand extending his long mantle, so as in some degree to hide his face; while the other held his cross-handled sword, with the point of which, sheathed as it was, he was slowly drawing lines upon the oaken floor.

'Unhappy man!' said the Grand Master, after favouring him with a glance of compassion. 'Thou seest, Conrade, how this holy work distresses him. To this can the light look of woman aided by the Prince of the Powers of this world bring a valiant and worthy knight! Seest thou he cannot look upon us; he cannot look upon her; and who knows by what impulse from his tormentor his hand forms these cabalistic lines upon the floor?

It may be our life and safety are thus aimed at ; but we spit at and defy the foul enemy. *Semper Leo percutiatur !*'

This was communicated apart to his confidential follower, Conrade Mont-Fitchet. The Grand Master then raised his voice and addressed the assembly.

'Reverend and valiant men, knights, preceptors, and companions of this holy order, my brethren and my children ! you also, well-born and pious esquires, who aspire to wear this Holy Cross ! and you also, Christian brethren, of every degree ! — be it known to you, that it is not defect of power in us which hath occasioned the assembling of this congregation ; for, however unworthy in our person, yet to us is committed, with this baton, full power to judge and to try all that regards the weal of this our holy order. Holy St. Bernard, in the rule of our knightly and religious profession, hath said, in the fifty-ninth capital,¹ that he would not that brethren be called together in council, save at the will and command of the Master ; leaving it free to us, as to those more worthy fathers who have preceded us in this our office, to judge as well of the occasion as of the time and place in which a chapter of the whole order, or of any part thereof, may be convoked. Also, in all such chapters, it is our duty to hear the advice of our brethren, and to proceed according to our own pleasure. But when the raging wolf hath made an inroad upon the flock, and carried off one member thereof, it is the duty of the kind shepherd to call his comrades together, that with bows and slings they may quell the invader, according to our well-known rule, that the lion is ever to be beaten down. We have therefore summoned to our presence a Jewish woman, by name Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York — a woman infamous for sortileges and for witcheries ; whereby she hath maddened the blood, and besotted the brain, not of a churl, but of a knight ; not of a secular knight, but of one devoted to the service of the Holy Temple ; not of a knight companion, but of a preceptor of our order, first in honour as in place. Our brother, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, is well known to ourselves, and to all degrees who now hear me, as a true and zealous champion of the Cross, by whose arm many deeds of valour have been wrought in the Holy Land, and the holy places purified from pollution by the blood of those infidels who defiled them. Neither have our brother's sagacity and prudence been less in repute among his brethren than his valour and

¹ The reader is again referred to the rules of the poor military brotherhood of the Temple, which occur in the *Works* of St. Bernard. — L. T.

discipline; insomuch that knights, both in eastern and western lands, have named De Bois-Guilbert as one who may well be put in nomination as successor to this baton, when it shall please Heaven to release us from the toil of bearing it. If we were told that such a man, so honoured, and so honourable, suddenly casting away regard for his character, his vows, his brethren, and his preceptors, had associated to himself a Jewish damsel, wandered in this lewd company through solitary places, defended her person in preference to his own, and, finally, was so utterly blinded and besotted by his folly, as to bring her even to one of our own preceptories, what should we say but that the noble knight was possessed by some evil demon, or influenced by some wicked spell? If we could suppose it otherwise, think not rank, valour, high reputation, or any earthly consideration, should prevent us from visiting him with punishment, that the evil thing might be removed, even according to the text, *Auferte malum ex vobis*. For various and heinous are the acts of transgression against the rule of our blessed order in this lamentable history. 1st, He hath walked according to his proper will, contrary to capital 33, *Quod nullus juxta propriam voluntatem incedat*. 2d, He hath held communication with an excommunicated person, capital 57, *Ut fratres non recipiant cum excommunicatis*, and therefore hath a portion in *Anathema Maranatha*. 3d, He hath conversed with strange women, contrary to the capital, *Ut fratres non conversentur cum mulieribus*. 4th, He hath not avoided, nay, he hath feared, solicited, the kiss of woman, by which, said the rule of our renowned order, *Ut fugiantur oscula*, the soldiers of the Cross are brought into a snare. For which heinous and multiplied guilt, Brian de Bois-Guilbert should be cut off and cast out from our congregation, were he the right hand and right eye thereof.

He paused. A low murmur went through the assembly. Some of the younger part, who had been inclined to smile at the statute *De osculis fugiendis*, became now grave enough, and anxiously waited what the Grand Master was next to propose.

'Such,' he said, 'and so great should indeed be the punishment of a Knight Templar who wilfully offended against the rules of his order in such weighty points. But if, by means of charms and of spells, Satan had obtained dominion over the knight, perchance because he cast his eyes too lightly upon a damsel's beauty, we are then rather to lament than chastise his backsliding; and, imposing on him only such penance as may

purify him from his iniquity, we are to turn the full edge of our indignation upon the accursed instrument, which had so wellnigh occasioned his utter falling away. Stand forth, therefore, and bear witness, ye who have witnessed these unhappy doings, that we may judge of the sum and bearing thereof; and judge whether our justice may be satisfied with the punishment of this infidel woman, or if we must go on, with a bleeding heart, to the further proceeding against our brother.'

Several witnesses were called upon to prove the risks to which Bois-Guilbert exposed himself in endeavouring to save Rebecca from the blazing castle, and his neglect of his personal defence in attending to her safety. The men gave these details with the exaggerations common to vulgar minds which have been strongly excited by any remarkable event, and their natural disposition to the marvellous was greatly increased by the satisfaction which the evidence seemed to afford to the eminent person for whose information it had been delivered. Thus the dangers which Bois-Guilbert surmounted, in themselves sufficiently great, became portentous in their narrative. The devotion of the knight to Rebecca's defence was exaggerated beyond the bounds not only of discretion, but even of the most frantic excess of chivalrous zeal; and his deference to what she said, even although her language was often severe and upbraiding, was painted as carried to an excess which, in a man of his haughty temper, seemed almost preternatural.

The preceptor of Templestowe was then called on to describe the manner in which Bois-Guilbert and the Jewess arrived at the preceptory. The evidence of Malvoisin was skilfully guarded. But while he apparently studied to spare the feelings of Bois-Guilbert, he threw in, from time to time, such hints as seemed to infer that he laboured under some temporary alienation of mind, so deeply did he appear to be enamoured of the damsel whom he brought along with him. With sighs of penitence, the preceptor avowed his own contrition for having admitted Rebecca and her lover within the walls of the preceptory. 'But my defence,' he concluded, 'has been made in my confession to our most reverend father the Grand Master; he knows my motives were not evil, though my conduct may have been irregular. Joyfully will I submit to any penance he shall assign me.'

'Thou hast spoken well, brother Albert,' said Beaumanoir; 'thy motives were good, since thou didst judge it right to arrest thine erring brother in his career of precipitate folly.'

But thy conduct was wrong ; as he that would stop a runaway steed, and seizing by the stirrup instead of the bridle, receiveth injury himself, instead of accomplishing his purpose. Thirteen paternosters are assigned by our pious founder for matins, and nine for vespers ; be those services doubled by thee. Thrice a-week are Templars permitted the use of flesh ; but do thou keep fast for all the seven days. This do for six weeks to come, and thy venance is accomplished.'

With hypocritical look of the deepest submission, the preceptor of Templestowe bowed to the ground before his superior, and resumed his seat.

'Were it not well, brethren,' said the Grand Master, 'that we examine something into the former life and conversation of this woman, specially that we may discover whether she be one likely to use magical charms and spells, since the truths which we have heard may well incline us to suppose that in this unhappy course our erring brother has been acted upon by some infernal enticement and delusion ?'

Herman of Goodalricke was the fourth preceptor present ; the other three were Conrade, Malvoisin, and Bois-Guilbert himself. Herman was an ancient warrior, whose face was marked with scars inflicted by the sabre of the Moslema, and had great rank and consideration among his brethren. He arose and bowed to the Grand Master, who instantly granted him license of speech. 'I would crave to know, most reverend father, of our valiant brother, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, what he says to these wondrous accusations, and with what eye he himself now regards his unhappy intercourse with this Jewish maiden ?'

'Brian de Bois-Guilbert,' said the Grand Master, 'thou hearest the question which our brother of Goodalricke desirest thou shouldst answer. I command thee to reply to him.'

Bois-Guilbert turned his head towards the Grand Master when thus addressed, and remained silent.

'He is possessed by a dumb devil,' said the Grand Master. 'Avoid thee, Sathanas ! Speak, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, I conjure thee, by this symbol of our holy order.'

Bois-Guilbert made an effort to suppress his rising scorn and indignation, the expression of which, he was well aware, would have little availed him. 'Brian de Bois-Guilbert,' he answered, 'replies not, most reverend father, to such wild and vague charges. If his honour be impeached, he will defend it with his body, and with that sword which has often fought for Christendom.'

'We forgive thee, brother Brian,' said the Grand Master; 'though that thou hast boasted thy warlike achievements before us is a glorifying of thine own deeds, and cometh of the Enemy, who tempteth us to exalt our own worship. But thou hast our pardon, judging thou speakest less of thine own suggestion than from the impulse of him whom, by Heaven's leave, we will quell and drive forth from our assembly.' A glance of disdain flashed from the dark fierce eyes of Bois-Guilbert, but he made no reply. 'And now,' pursued the Grand Master, 'since our brother of Goodalricke's question has been thus imperfectly answered, pursue we our quest, brethren, and with our patron's assistance we will search to the bottom this mystery of iniquity. Let those who have aught to witness of the life and conversation of this Jewish woman stand forth before us.'

There was a bustle in the lower part of the hall, and when the Grand Master inquired the reason, it was replied, there was in the crowd a bedridden man, whom the prisoner had restored to the perfect use of his limbs, by a miraculous balsam.

The poor peasant, a Saxon by birth, was dragged forward to the bar, terrified at the penal consequences which he might have incurred by the guilt of having been cured of the palsy by a Jewish damsel. Perfectly cured he certainly was not, for he supported himself forward on crutches to give evidence. Most unwilling was his testimony, and given with many tears; but he admitted that two years since, when residing at York, he was suddenly afflicted with a sore disease, while labouring for Isaac the rich Jew, in his vocation of a joiner; that he had been unable to stir from his bed until the remedies applied by Rebecca's directions, and especially a warming and spicy-smelling balsam, had in some degree restored him to the use of his limbs. Moreover, he said, she had given him a pot of that precious ointment, and furnished him with a piece of money withal, to return to the house of his father, near to Templestowe. 'And may it please your gracious reverence,' said the man, 'I cannot think the damsel meant harm by me, though she hath the ill hap to be a Jewess; for even when I used her remedy, I said the pater and the creed, and it never operated a whit less kindly.'

'Peace, slave,' said the Grand Master, 'and begone! It well suits brutes like thee to be tampering and trinketing with hellish cures, and to be giving your labour to the sons of mischief. I tell thee, the fiend can impose diseases for the

ver, purpose of removing them, in order to bring into credit some diabolical fashion of cure. Hast thou that unguent of which thou speakest !'

The peasant, fumbling in his bosom with a trembling hand, produced a small box, bearing some Hebrew characters on the lid, which was, with most of the audience, a sure proof that the devil had stood apothecary. Beaumanoir, after crossing himself, took the box into his hand, and, learned in most of the Eastern tongues, read with ease the motto on the lid — 'The Lion of the Tribe of Judah hath conquered.' 'Strange powers of Sathanas,' said he, 'which can convert Scripture into blasphemy, mingling poison with our necessary food ! Is there no leech here who can tell us the ingredients of this mystic unguent ?'

Two mediciners, as they called themselves, the one a monk, the other a barber, appeared, and avouched they knew nothing of the materials, excepting that they savoured of myrrh and camphire, which they took to be Oriental herbs. But with the true professional hatred to a successful practitioner of their art, they insinuated that, since the medicine was beyond their own knowledge, it must necessarily have been compounded from an unlawful and magical pharmacopœia ; since they themselves, though no conjurers, fully understood every branch of their art, so far as it might be exercised with the good faith of a Christian. When this medical research was ended, the Saxon peasant desired humbly to have back the medicine which he had found so salutary ; but the Grand Master frowned severely at the request. 'What is thy name, fellow ?' said he to the cripple.

'Higg, the son of Snell,' answered the peasant.

'Then, Higg, son of Snell,' said the Grand Master, 'I tell thee, it is better to be bedridden than to accept the benefit of unbelievers' medicine that thou mayest arise and walk ; better to despoil infidels of their treasure by the strong hand than to accept of them benevolent gifts, or do them service for wages. Go thou, and do as I have said.'

'Mack,' said the peasant, 'an it shall not displease your reverence, the lesson comes too late for me, for I am but a maimed man ; but I will tell my two brethren, who serve the rich rabbi Nathan ben Samuel, that your mastership says it is more lawful to rob him than to render him faithful service.'

'Out with the prating villain !' said Beaumanoir, who was

not prepared to refute this practical application of his general maxim.

Higg, the son of Snell, withdrew into the crowd, but, interested in the fate of his benefactress, lingered until he should learn her doom, even at the risk of again encountering the frown of that severe judge, the terror of which withered his very heart within him.

At this period of the trial, the Grand Master commanded Rebecca to unveil herself. Opening her lips for the first time, she replied patiently, but with dignity, 'That it was not the wont of the daughters of her people to uncover their faces when alone in an assembly of strangers.' The sweet tones of her voice, and the softness of her reply, impressed on the audience a sentiment of pity and sympathy. But Beaumanoir, in whose mind the suppression of each feeling of humanity which could interfere with his imagined duty was a virtue of itself, repeated his commands that his victim should be unveiled. The guards were about to remove her veil accordingly, when she stood up before the Grand Master, and said, 'Nay, but for the love of your own daughters — alas,' she said, recollecting herself, 'ye have no daughters! — yet for the remembrance of your mothers, for the love of your sisters, and of female decency, let me not be thus handled in your presence: it suits not a maiden to be disrobed by such rude grooms. I will obey you,' she added, with an expression of patient sorrow in her voice, which had almost melted the heart of Beaumanoir himself; 'ye are elders among your people, and at your command I will show the features of this ill-fated maiden.'

She withdrew her veil, and looked on them with a countenance in which bashfulness contended with dignity. Her exceeding beauty excited a murmur of surprise, and the younger knights told each other with their eyes, in silent correspondence, that Brian's best apology was in the power of her real charms, rather than of her imaginary witchcraft. But Higg, the son of Snell, felt most deeply the effect produced by the sight of the countenance of his benefactress. 'Let me go forth,' he said to the warders at the door of the hall — 'let me go forth! To look at her again will kill me, for I have had a share in murdering her.'

'Peace, poor man,' said Rebecca, when she heard his exclamation; 'thou hast done me no harm by speaking the truth; thou canst not aid me by thy complaints or lamentations. Peace, I pray thee; go home and save thyself.'

Higg was about to be thrust out by the compassion of the warders, who were apprehensive lest his clamorous grief should draw upon them reprehension, and upon himself punishment. But he promised to be silent, and was permitted to remain. The two men-at-arms, with whom Albert Malvoisin had not failed to communicate upon the import of their testimony, were now called forward. Though both were hardened and inflexible villains, the sight of the captive maiden, as well as her excelling beauty, at first appeared to stagger them; but an expressive glance from the preceptor of Templestowe restored them to their dogged composure; and they delivered, with a precision which would have seemed suspicious to more impartial judges, circumstances either altogether fictitious or trivial, and natural in themselves, but rendered pregnant with suspicion by the exaggerated manner in which they were told, and the sinister commentary which the witnesses added to the facts. The circumstances of their evidence would have been, in modern days, divided into two classes — those which were immaterial and those which were actually and physically impossible. But both were, in those ignorant and superstitious times, easily credited as proofs of guilt. The first class set forth that Rebecca was heard to mutter to herself in an unknown tongue; that the songs she sung by fits were of a strangely sweet sound, which made the ears of the hearer tingle and his heart throb; that she spoke at times to herself, and seemed to look upward for a reply; that her garments were of a strange and mystic form, unlike those of women of good repute; that she had rings impressed with cabalistical devices, and that strange characters were brodered on her veil. All these circumstances, so natural and so trivial, were gravely listened to as proofs, or at least as affording strong suspicions, that Rebecca had unlawful correspondence with mystical powers.

But there was less equivocal testimony, which the credulity of the assembly, or of the greater part, greedily swallowed, however incredible. One of the soldiers had seen her work a cure upon a wounded man brought with them to the castle of Torquilstone. 'She did,' he said, 'make certain signs upon the wour', and repeated certain mysterious words, which he blessed God he understood not, when the iron head of a square cross-bow bolt disengaged itself from the wound, the bleeding was stanch'd, the wound was closed, and the dying man was, within the quarter of an hour, walking upon the ramparts, and assisting the witness in managing a mangonel, or machine for

hurling stones.' This legend was probably founded upon the fact that Rebecca had attended on the wounded Ivanhoe when in the castle of Torquilstone. But it was the more difficult to dispute the accuracy of the witness, as, in order to produce real evidence in support of his verbal testimony, he drew from his pouch the very bolt-head which, according to his story, had been miraculously extracted from the wound; and as the iron weighed a full ounce, it completely confirmed the tale, however miraculous.

His comrade had been a witness from a neighbouring battlement of the scene betwixt Rebecca and Bois-Guilbert, when she was upon the point of precipitating herself from the top of the tower. Not to be behind his companion, this fellow stated that he had seen Rebecca perch herself upon the parapet of the turret, and there take the form of a milk-white swan, under which appearance she flitted three times round the castle of Torquilstone; then again settle on the turret, and once more assume the female form.

Less than one half of this weighty evidence would have been sufficient to convict any old woman, poor and ugly, even though she had not been a Jewess. United with that fatal circumstance, the body of proof was too weighty for Rebecca's youth, though combined with the most exquisite beauty.

The Grand Master had collected the suffrages, and now in a solemn tone demanded of Rebecca what she had to say against the sentence of condemnation which he was about to pronounce.

'To invoke your pity,' said the lovely Jewess, with a voice tremulous with emotion, 'would, I am aware, be as useless as I should hold it mean. To state, that to relieve the sick and wounded of another religion cannot be displeasing to the acknowledged Founder of both our faiths, were also unavailing; to plead, that many things which these men — whom may Heaven pardon! — have spoken against me are impossible, would avail me but little, since you believe in their possibility; and still less would it advantage me to explain that the peculiarities of my dress, language, and manners are those of my people — I had wellnigh said of my country, but, alas! we have no country. Nor will I even vindicate myself at the expense of my oppressor, who stands there listening to the fictions and surmises which seem to convert the tyrant into the victim. God be judge between him and me! but rather would I submit to ten such deaths as your pleasure may denounce

against me than listen to the suit which that man of Belial has urged upon me — friendless, defenceless, and his prisoner. But he is of your own faith, and his lightest affirmance would weigh down the most solemn protestations of the distressed Jewess. I will not therefore return to himself the charge brought against me ; but to himself — yes, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, to thyself I appeal, whether these accusations are not false ? as monstrous and calumnious as they are deadly ?

There was a pause ; all eyes turned to Brian de Bois-Guilbert. He was silent.

‘Speak,’ she said, ‘if thou art a man ; if thou art a Christian, speak ! I conjure thee, by the habit which thou dost wear — by the name thou dost inherit — by the knighthood thou dost vaunt — by the honour of thy mother — by the tomb and the bones of thy father — I conjure thee to say, are these things true ?’

‘Answer her, brother,’ said the Grand Master, ‘if the Enemy with whom thou dost wrestle will give thee power.’

In fact, Bois-Guilbert seemed agitated by contending passions, which almost convulsed his features, and it was with a constrained voice that at last he replied, looking to Rebecca — ‘The scroll ! — the scroll !’

‘Ay,’ said Beaumanoir, ‘this is indeed testimony ! The victim of her witcheries can only name the fatal scroll, the spell inscribed on which is, doubtless, the cause of his silence.’

But Rebecca put another interpretation on the words extorted as it were from Bois-Guilbert, and glancing her eye upon the slip of parchment which she continued to hold in her hand, she read written thereupon in the Arabian character, ‘Demand a champion !’ The murmuring commentary which ran through the assembly at the strange reply of Bois-Guilbert gave Rebecca leisure to examine and instantly to destroy the scroll unobserved. When the whisper had ceased, the Grand Master spoke.

‘Rebecca, thou canst derive no benefit from the evidence of this unhappy knight, for whom, as we well perceive, the Enemy is yet too powerful. Hast thou aught else to say ?’

‘There is yet one chance of life left to me,’ said Rebecca, ‘even by your own fierce laws. Life has been miserable — miserable, at least, of late — but I will not cast away the gift of God while He affords me the means of defending it. I deny this charge : I maintain my innocence, and I declare the falsehood of this accusation. I challenge the privilege of trial by combat, and will appear by my champion.’

'And who, Rebecca,' replied the Grand Master, 'will lay lance in rest for a sorceress? who will be the champion of a Jewess?'

'God will raise me up a champion,' said Rebecca. 'It cannot be that in merry England, the hospitable, the generous, the free, where so many are ready to peril their lives for honour, there will not be found one to fight for justice. But it is enough that I challenge the trial by combat: there lies my gage.'

She took her embroidered glove from her hand, and flung it down before the Grand Master with an air of mingled simplicity and dignity which excited universal surprise and admiration.



"I CHALLENGE THE TRIAL BY COMBAT—THERE LIES MY GAGE."



CHAPTER XXXVIII

There I throw my gage,
To prove it on thee to the extremest point
Of martial daring.

Richard II.

EVEN Lucas Beaumanoir himself was affected by the mien and appearance of Rebecca. He was not originally a cruel or even a severe man; but with passions by nature cold, and with a high, though mistaken, sense of duty, his heart had been gradually hardened by the ascetic life which he pursued, the supreme power which he enjoyed, and the supposed necessity of subduing infidelity and eradicating heresy which he conceived peculiarly incumbent on him. His features relaxed in their usual severity as he gazed upon the beautiful creature before him, alone, unfriended, and defending herself with so much spirit and courage. He crossed himself twice, as doubting whence arose the unwonted softening of a heart which on such occasions used to resemble in hardness the steel of his sword. At length he spoke.

'Damsel,' he said, 'if the pity I feel for thee arise from any practice thine evil arts have made on me, great is thy guilt. But I rather judge it the kinder feelings of nature, which grieves that so goodly a form should be a vessel of perdition. Repent, my daughter, confess thy witchcrafts, turn thee from thine evil faith, embrace this holy emblem, and all shall yet be well with thee here and hereafter. In some sisterhood of the strictest order shalt thou have time for prayer and fitting penance, and that repentance not to be repented of. This do and live: what has the law of Moses done for thee that thou shouldest die for it?'

'It was the law of my fathers,' said Rebecca; 'it was delivered in thunders and in storms upon the mountain of Sinai, in cloud and in fire. This, if ye are Christians, ye believe. It is, you say, recalled; but so my teachers have not taught me.'

'Let our chaplain,' said Beaumanoir, 'stand forth, and tell this obstinate infidel——'

'Forgive the interruption,' said Rebecca, meekly; 'I am a maiden, unskilled to dispute for my religion; but I can die of it, if it be God's will. Let me pray your answer to my demand of a champion.'

'Give me her glove,' said Beaumanoir. 'This is indeed,' he continued, as he looked at the flimsy texture and slender fingers, 'a slight and frail gage for a purpose so deadly! Seest thou, Rebecca, as this thin and light glove of thine is to one of our heavy steel gauntlets, so is thy cause to that of the Temple, for it is our order which thou hast defied.'

'Cast my innocence into the scale,' answered Rebecca, 'and the glove of silk shall outweigh the glove of iron.'

'Then thou dost persist in thy refusal to confess thy guilt, and in that bold challenge which thou hast made?'

'I do persist, noble sir,' answered Rebecca.

'So be it then, in the name of Heaven,' said the Grand Master; 'and may God show the right!'

'Amen,' replied the preceptors around him, and the word was deeply echoed by the whole assembly.

'Brethren,' said Beaumanoir, 'you are aware that we might well have refused to this woman the benefit of the trial by combat; but, though a Jewess and an unbeliever, she is also a stranger and defenceless, and God forbid that she should ask the benefit of our mild laws and that it should be refused to her. Moreover, we are knights and soldiers as well as men of religion, and shame it were to us, upon any pretence, to refuse proffered combat. Thus, therefore, stands the case. Rebecca, the daughter of Isaac of York, is, by many frequent and suspicious circumstances, defamed of sorcery practised on the person of a noble knight of our holy order, and hath challenged the combat in proof of her innocence. To whom, reverend brethren, is it your opinion that we should deliver the gage of battle, naming him, at the same time, to be our champion on the field?'

'To Brian de Bois-Guilbert, whom it chiefly concerns,' said the preceptor of Goodalricke, 'and who, moreover, best knows how the truth stands in this matter.'

'But if,' said the Grand Master, 'our brother Brian be under the influence of a charm or a spell — we speak but for the sake of precaution, for to the arm of none of our holy order would we more willingly confide this or a more weighty cause.'

'Reverend father,' answered the preceptor of Goodalricke,

'no spell can affect the champion who comes forward to fight for the judgment of God.'

'Thou sayest right, brother,' said the Grand Master. 'Albert Malvoisin, give this gage of battle to Brian de Bois-Guilbert. 'It is our charge to thee, brother,' he continued, addressing himself to Bois-Guilbert, 'that thou do thy battle manfully, nothing doubting that the good cause shall triumph. And do thou, Rebecca, attend, that we assign thee the third day from the present to find a champion.'

'That is but brief space,' answered Rebecca, 'for a stranger, who is also of another faith, to find one who will do battle, wagering life and honour for her cause, against a knight who is called an approved soldier.'

'We may not extend it,' answered the Grand Master; 'the field must be foughten in our own presence, and divers weighty causes call us on the fourth day from hence.'

'God's will be done!' said Rebecca; 'I put my trust in Him, to whom an instant is as effectual to save as a whole age.'

'Thou hast spoken well, damsel,' said the Grand Master; 'but well know we who can array himself like an angel of light. It remains but to name a fitting place of combat, and, if it so hap, also of execution. Where is the preceptor of this house?'

Albert Malvoisin, still holding Rebecca's glove in his hand, was speaking to Bois-Guilbert very earnestly, but in a low voice.

'How!' said the Grand Master, 'will he not receive the gage?'

'He will—he doth, most reverend father,' said Malvoisin, slipping the glove under his own mantle. 'And for the place of combat, I hold the fittest to be the lists of St. George belonging to this preceptory, and used by us for military exercise.'

'It is well,' said the Grand Master. 'Rebecca, in those lists shalt thou produce thy champion; and if thou failest to do so, or if thy champion shall be discomfited by the judgment of God, thou shalt then die the death of a sorceress, according to doom. Let this our judgment be recorded, and the record read aloud that no one may pretend ignorance.'

One of the chaplains who acted as clerks to the chapter immediately engrossed the order in a huge volume, which contained the proceedings of the Templar Knights when solemnly assembled on such occasions; and when he had finished writing, the other read aloud the sentence of the Grand Master,

which, when translated from the Norman-French in which it was couched, was expressed as follows :—

'Rebecca, a Jewess, daughter of Isaac of York, being attainted of sorcery, seduction, and other damnable practices, practised on a knight of the most holy order of the Temple of Zion, doth deny the same, and saith that the testimony delivered against her this day is false, wicked, and disloyal; and that by lawful *essoine*¹ of her body, as being unable to combat in her own behalf, she doth offer, by a champion instead thereof, to avouch her case, he performing his loyal devoir in all knightly sort, with such arms as to gage of battle do fully appertain, and that at her peril and cost. And therewith she proffered her gage. And the gage having been delivered to the noble lord and knight, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, of the holy order of the Temple of Zion, he was appointed to do this battle in behalf of his order and himself, as injured and impaired by the practices of the appellant. Wherefore the most reverend father and puissant lord, Lucas Marquis of Beaumanoir, did allow of the said challenge, and of the said *essoine* of the appellant's body, and assigned the third day for the said combat, the place being the inclosure called the lists of St. George, near to the preceptory of Templestowe. And the Grand Master appointed the appellant to appear there by her champion, on pain of doom, as a person convicted of sorcery or seduction; and also the defendant so to appear, under the penalty of being held and adjudged recreant in case of default; and the noble lord and most reverend father aforesaid appointed the battle to be done in his own presence, and according to all that is commendable and profitable in such a case. And may God aid the just cause!'

'Amen!' said the Grand Master; and the word was echoed by all around. Rebecca spoke not, but she looked up to Heaven, and, folding her hands, remained for a minute without change of attitude. She then modestly reminded the Grand Master that she ought to be permitted some opportunity of free communication with her friends, for the purpose of making her condition known to them, and procuring, if possible, some champion to fight in her behalf.

'It is just and lawful,' said the Grand Master; 'choose what messenger thou shalt trust, and he shall have free communication with thee in thy prison-chamber.'

¹ *Essoine* signifies excuse, and here relates to the appellant's privilege of appearing by her champion, in excuse of her own person on account of her sex.

'Is there,' said Rebecca, 'any one here who, either for love of a good cause or for ample hire, will do the errand of a distressed being?'

All were silent; for none thought it safe, in the presence of the Grand Master, to avow any interest in the calumniated prisoner, lest he should be suspected of leaning towards Judaism. Not even the prospect of reward, far less any feelings of compassion alone, could surmount this apprehension.

Rebecca stood for a few moments in indescribable anxiety, and then exclaimed, 'Is it really thus? And in English land am I to be deprived of the poor chance of safety which remains to me, for want of an act of charity which would not be refused to the worst criminal?'

Higg, the son of Snell, at length replied, 'I am but a maimed man, but that I can at all stir or move was owing to her charitable assistance. I will do thine errand,' he added, addressing Rebecca, 'as well as a crippled object can, and happy were my limbs fleet enough to repair the mischief done by my tongue. Alas! when I boasted of thy charity, I little thought I was leading thee into danger!'

'God,' said Rebecca, 'is the disposer of all. He can turn the captivity of Judah, even by the weakest instrument. To execute His message the snail is as sure a messenger as the falcon. Seek out Isaac of York — here is that will pay for horse and man — let him have this scroll. I know not if it be of Heaven the spirit which inspires me, but most truly do I judge that I am not to die this death, and that a champion will be raised up for me. Farewell! Life and death are in thy haste.'

The peasant took the scroll, which contained only a few lines in Hebrew. Many of the crowd would have dissuaded him from touching a document so suspicious; but Higg was resolute in the service of his benefactress. 'She had saved his body,' he said, 'and he was confident she did not mean to peril his soul.'

'I will get me,' he said, 'my neighbour Buthan's good capul,¹ and I will be at York within as brief space as man and beast may.'

But, as it fortune'd, he had no occasion to go so far, for within a quarter of a mile from the gate of the preceptory he met with two riders, whom, by their dress and their huge yellow caps, he knew to be Jews; and, on approaching more nearly, discovered that one of them was his ancient employer,

¹ Capul, *i. e.*, horse; in a more limited sense, work-horse.

Isaac of York. The other was the Rabbi ben Samuel ; and both had approached as near to the preceptory as they dared, on hearing that the Grand Master had summoned a chapter for the trial of a sorceress.

'Brother ben Samuel,' said Isaac, 'my soul is disquieted, and I wot not why. This charge of necromancy is right often used for cloaking evil practices on our people.'

'Be of good comfort, brother,' said the physician ; 'thou canst deal with the Nazarenes as one possessing the mammon of unrighteousness, and canst therefore purchase immunity at their hands : it rules the savage minds of those ungodly men, even as the signet of the mighty Solomon was said to command the evil genii. But what poor wretch comes hither upon his crutches, desiring, as I think, some speech of me ? Friend,' continued the physician, addressing Higg, the son of Snell, 'I refuse thee not the aid of mine art, but I relieve not with one asper those who beg for alms upon the highway. Out upon thee ! Hast thou the palsy in thy legs ? then let thy hands work for thy livelihood ; for, albeit thou be'st unfit for a speedy post, or for a careful shepherd, or for the warfare, or for the service of a hasty master, yet there be occupations — How now, brother ?' said he, interrupting his harangue to look towards Isaac, who had but glanced at the scroll which Higg offered, when, uttering a deep groan, he fell from his mule like a dying man, and lay for a minute insensible.

The Rabbi now dismounted in great alarm, and hastily applied the remedies which his art suggested for the recovery of his companion. He had even taken from his pocket a cupping apparatus, and was about to proceed to phlebotomy, when the object of his anxious solicitude suddenly revived ; but it was to dash his cap from his head, and to throw dust on his grey hairs. The physician was at first inclined to ascribe this sudden and violent emotion to the effects of insanity ; and, adhering to his original purpose, began once again to handle his implements. But Isaac soon convinced him of his error.

'Child of my sorrow,' he said, 'well shouldst thou be called Benoni, instead of Rebecca ! Why should thy death bring down my grey hairs to the grave, till, in the bitterness of my heart, I curse God and die !'

'Brother,' said the Rabbi, in great surprise, 'art thou a father in Israel, and dost thou utter words like unto these ? I trust that the child of thy house yet liveth ?'

'She liveth,' answered Isaac ; 'but it is as Daniel, who was

called Belteshazzar, even when within the den of the lions. She is captive unto those men of Belial, and they will wreak their cruelty upon her, sparing neither for her youth nor her comely favour. O! she was as a crown of green palms to my grey locks; and she must wither in a night, like the gourd of Jonah! Child of my love! — child of my old age! — oh, Rebecca, daughter of Rachael! the darkness of the shadow of death hath encompassed thee.

'Yet read the scroll,' said the Rabbi; 'peradventure it may be that we may yet find out a way of deliverance.'

'Do thou read, brother,' answered Isaac, 'for mine eyes are as a fountain of water.'

The physician read, but in their native language, the following words:—

'To Isaac, the son of Adonikam, whom the Gentiles call Isaac of York, peace and the blessing of the promise be multiplied unto thee! My father, I am as one doomed to die for that which my soul knoweth not, even for the crime of witchcraft. My father, if a strong man can be found to do battle for my cause with sword and spear, according to the custom of the Nazarenes, and that within the lists of Templestowe, on the third day from this time, peradventure our fathers' God will give him strength to defend the innocent, and her who hath none to help her. But if this may not be, let the virgins of our people mourn for me as for one cast off, and for the hart that is stricken by the hunter, and for the flower which is cut down by the scythe of the mower. Wherefore look now what thou doest, and whether there be any rescue. One Nazarene warrior might indeed bear arms in my behalf, even Wilfred, son of Cedric, whom the Gentiles call Ivanhoe. But he may not yet endure the weight of his armour. Nevertheless, send the tidings unto him, my father; for he hath favour among the strong men of his people, and as he was our companion in the house of bondage, he may find some one to do battle for my sake. And say unto him — even unto him — even unto Wilfred, the son of Cedric, that if Rebecca live, or if Rebecca die, she liveth or dieth wholly free of the guilt she is charged withal. And if it be the will of God that thou shalt be deprived of thy daughter, do not thou tarry, old man, in this land of bloodshed and cruelty; but betake thyself to Cordova, where thy brother liveth in safety, under the shadow of the throne, even of the throne of Boabdil the Saracen; for less cruel are the cruelties of the Moors unto the race of Jacob than the cruelties of the Nazarenes of England.'

Isaac listened with tolerable composure while Ben Samuel read the letter and then again resumed the gestures and exclamations of Oriental sorrow, tearing his garments, besprinkling his head with dust, and ejaculating, 'My daughter! my daughter! flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone!'

'Yet,' said the Rabbi, 'take courage, for this grief availeth nothing. Gird up thy loins, and seek out this Wilfred, the son of Cedric. It may be he will help thee with counsel or with strength; for the youth hath favour in the eyes of Richard, called of the Nazarenes *Cœur-de-Lion*, and the tidings that he hath returned are constant in the land. It may be that he may obtain his letter, and his signet, commanding these men of blood, who take their name from the Temple to the dishonour thereof, that they proceed not in their purposed wickedness.'

'I will seek him out,' said Isaac, 'for he is a good youth, and hath compassion for the exile of Jacob. But he cannot bear his armour, and what other Christian shall do battle for the oppressed of Zion?'

'Nay, but,' said the Rabbi, 'thou speakest as one that knoweth not the Gentiles. With gold shalt thou buy their valour, even as with gold thou buyest thine own safety. Be of good courage, and do thou set forward to find out this Wilfred of Ivanhoe. I will also up and be doing, for great sin it were to leave thee in thy calamity. I will hie me to the city of York, where many warriors and strong men are assembled, and doubt not I will find among them some one who will do battle for thy daughter; for gold is their god, and for riches will they pawn their lives as well as their lands. Thou wilt fulfil, my brother, such promise as I may make unto them in thy name!'

'Assuredly, brother,' said Isaac, 'and Heaven be praised that raised me up a comforter in my misery! Howbeit, grant them not their full demand at once, for thou shalt find it the quality of this accursed people that they will ask pounds, and peradventure accept of ounces. Nevertheless, be it as thou wilt, for I am distracted in this thing, and what would my gold avail me if the child of my love should perish!'

'Farewell,' said the physician, 'and may it be to thee as thy heart desireth.'

They embraced accordingly, and departed on their several roads. The crippled peasant remained for some time looking after them.

'These dog Jews!' said he; 'to take no more notice of a

free guild-brother than if I were a bond slave or a Turk, or a circumcised Hebrew like themselves ! They might have flung me a mancus or two, however. I was not obliged to bring their unhallowed scrawls, and run the risk of being bewitched, as more folks than one told me. And what care I for the bit of gold that the wench gave me, if I am to come to harm from the priest next Easter at confession, and be obliged to give him twice as much to make it up with him, and be called the Jew's flying post all my life, as it may hap, into the bargain ? I think I was bewitched in earnest when I was beside the girl ! But it was always so with Jew or Gentile, whomever came near her : none could stay when she had an errand to go ; and still, whenever I think of her, I would give shop and tools to save her life.'

CHAPTER XXXIX

O maid, unrelenting and cold as thou art,
My bosom is proud as thine own.

SEWARD.

IT was in the twilight of the day when her trial, if it could be called such, had taken place, that a low knock was heard at the door of Rebecca's prison-chamber. It disturbed not the inmate, who was then engaged in the evening prayer recommended by her religion, and which concluded with a hymn we have ventured thus to translate into English : —

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,
Out of the land of bondage came,
Her fathers' God before her moved,
An awful guide, in smoke and flame.
By day, along the astonish'd lands
The cloudy pillar glided slow ;
By night, Arabia's crimson'd sands
Return'd the fiery column's glow.

There rose the choral hymn of praise,
And trump and timbrel answer'd keen,
And Zion's daughters pour'd their lays,
With priest's and warrior's voice between.
No portents now our foes amaze,
Forsaken Israel wanders lone ;
Our fathers would not know THY ways,
And THOU hast left them to their own.

But, present still, though now unseen,
When brightly shines the prosperous day,
Be thoughts of THEE a cloudy screen
To temper the deceitful ray.
And oh, when stoops on Judah's path
In shade and storm the frequent night,
Be THOU, long-suffering, slow to wrath,
A burning and a shining light !

Our harps we left by Babel's streams,
The tyrant's jest, the Gentile's scorn ;

No censer round our altar beams,
And mute our timbrel, trump, and horn.
But THOU hast said, the blood of goat,
The flesh of rams, I will not prize ;
A contrite heart, an humble thought,
Are Mine accepted sacrifice.

When the sounds of Rebecca's devotional hymn had died away in silence, the low knock at the door was again renewed. 'Enter,' she said, 'if thou art a friend ; and if a foe, I have not the means of refusing thy entrance.'

'I am,' said Brian de Bois-Guilbert, entering the apartment, 'friend or foe, Rebecca, as the event of this interview shall make me.'

Alarmed at the sight of this man, whose licentious passion she considered as the root of her misfortunes, Rebecca drew backward with a cautious and alarmed, yet not a timorous, demeanour into the farthest corner of the apartment, as if determined to retreat as far as she could, but to stand her ground when retreat became no longer possible. She drew herself into an attitude not of defiance, but of resolution, as one that would avoid provoking assault, yet was resolute to repel it, being offered, to the utmost of her power.

'You have no reason to fear me, Rebecca,' said the Templar ; 'or, if I must so qualify my speech, you have at least *now* no reason to fear me.'

'I fear you not, Sir Knight,' replied Rebecca, although her short-drawn breath seemed to belie the heroism of her accents ; 'my trust is strong, and I fear thee not.'

'You have no cause,' answered Bois-Guilbert, gravely ; 'my former frantic attempts you have not now to dread. Within your call are guards over whom I have no authority. They are designed to conduct you to death, Rebecca, yet would not suffer you to be insulted by any one, even by me, were my frenzy — for frenzy it is — to urge me so far.'

'May Heaven be praised !' said the Jewess ; 'death is the least of my apprehensions in this den of evil.'

'Ay,' replied the Templar, 'the idea of death is easily received by the courageous mind, when the road to it is sudden and open. A thrust with a lance, a stroke with a sword, were to me little ; to you, a spring from a dizzy battlement, a stroke with a sharp poniard, has no terrors, compared with what either thinks disgrace. Mark me — I say this — perhaps mine own sentiments of honour are not less fantas-

tic, Rebecca, than thine are ; but we know alike how to die for them.'

'Unhappy man,' said the Jewess ; 'and art thou condemned to expose thy life for principles of which thy sober judgment does not acknowledge the solidity ? Surely this is a parting with your treasure for that which is not bread. But deem not so of me. Thy resolution may fluctuate on the wild and changeful billows of human opinion : but mine is anchored on the Rock of Ages.'

'Silence, maiden,' answered the Templar ; 'such discourse now avails but little. Thou art condemned to die not a sudden and easy death, such as misery chooses and despair welcomes, but a slow, wretched, protracted course of torture, suited to what the diabolical bigotry of these men calls thy crime.'

'And to whom — if such my fate — to whom do I owe this ?' said Rebecca ; 'surely only to him who, for a most selfish and brutal cause, dragged me hither, and who now, for some unknown purpose of his own, strives to exaggerate the wretched fate to which he exposed me.'

'Think not,' said the Templar, 'that I have so exposed thee ; I would have bucklered thee against such danger with my own bosom, as freely as ever I exposed it to the shafts which had otherwise reached thy life.'

'Had thy purpose been the honourable protection of the innocent,' said Rebecca, 'I had thanked thee for thy care : as it is, thou hast claimed merit for it so often that I tell thee life is worth nothing to me, preserved at the price which thou wouldst exact for it.'

'Truce with thine upbraidings, Rebecca,' said the Templar ; 'I have my own cause of grief, and brook not that reproaches should add to it.'

'What is thy purpose, then, Sir Knight ?' said the Jewess ; 'speak it briefly. If thou hast aught to do save to witness the misery thou hast caused, let me know it ; and then, if so it please you, leave me to myself. The step between time and eternity is short but terrible, and I have few moments to prepare for it.'

'I perceive, Rebecca,' said Bois-Guilbert, 'that thou dost continue to burden me with the charge of distresses which most fain would I have prevented.'

'Sir Knight,' said Rebecca, 'I would avoid reproaches ; what is more certain than that I owe my death to thine unbridled passion ?'

'You err — you err,' said the Templar, hastily, 'if you impute what I could neither foresee nor prevent to my purpose or agency. Could I guess the unexpected arrival of yon dotard, whom some flashes of frantic valour, and the praises yielded by fools to the stupid self-torments of an ascetic, have raised for the present above his own merits, above common sense, above me, and above the hundreds of our order who think and feel as men free from such silly and fantastic prejudices as are the grounds of his opinions and actions?'

'Yet,' said Rebecca, 'you sate a judge upon me; innocent — most innocent — as you knew me to be, you concurred in my condemnation; and, if I aright understood, are yourself to appear in arms to assert my guilt, and assure my punishment.'

'Thy patience, maiden,' replied the Templar. 'No race knows so well as thine own tribes how to submit to the time, and so to trim their bark as to make advantage even of an adverse wind.'

'Lamented be the hour,' said Rebecca, 'that has taught such art to the House of Israel: but adversity bends the heart as fire bends the stubborn steel, and those who are no longer their own governors, and the denizens of their own free independent state, must crouch before strangers. It is our curse, Sir Knight, deserved, doubtless, by our own misdeeds and those of our fathers; but you — you who boast your freedom as your birthright, how much deeper is your disgrace when you stoop to soothe the prejudices of others, and that against your own conviction?'

'Your words are bitter, Rebecca,' said Bois-Guilbert, pacing the apartment with impatience, 'but I came not hither to bandy reproaches with you. Know that Bois-Guilbert yields not to created man, although circumstances may for a time induce him to alter his plan. His will is the mountain stream, which may indeed be turned for a little space aside by the rock, but fails not to find its course to the ocean. That scroll which warned thee to demand a champion, from whom couldst thou think it came, if not from Bois-Guilbert? In whom else couldst thou have excited such interest?'

'A brief respite from instant death,' said Rebecca, 'which will little avail me. Was this all thou couldst do for one on whose head thou hast heaped sorrow, and whom thou hast brought near even to the verge of the tomb?'

'No, maiden,' said Bois-Guilbert, 'this was *not* all that I purposed. Had it not been for the accursed interference of

yon fanatical dotard, and the fool of Goodalricke, who, being a Templar, affects to think and judge according to the ordinary rules of humanity, the office of the champion defender had devolved, not on a preceptor, but on a companion of the order. Then I myself—such was my purpose—had, on the sounding of the trumpet, appeared in the lists as thy champion, disguised indeed in the fashion of a roving knight, who seeks adventures to prove his shield and spear; and then, let Beaumanoir have chosen not one but two or three of the brethren here assembled, I had not doubted to cast them out of the saddle with my single lance. Thus, Rebecca, should thine innocence have been avouched, and to thine own gratitude would I have trusted for the reward of my victory.

'This, Sir Knight,' said Rebecca, 'is but idle boasting—a brag of what you would have done had you not found it convenient to do otherwise. You received my glove, and my champion, if a creature so desolate can find one, must encounter your lance in the lists; yet you would assume the air of my friend and protector!'

'Thy friend and protector,' said the Templar, gravely, 'I will yet be; but mark at what risk, or rather at what certainty, of dishonour; and then blame me not if I make my stipulations before I offer up all that I have hitherto held dear, to save the life of a Jewish maiden.'

'Speak,' said Rebecca; 'I understand thee not.'

'Well, then,' said Bois-Guilbert, 'I will speak as freely as ever did doting penitent to his ghostly father, when placed in the tricky confessional. Rebecca, if I appear not in these lists I lose fame and rank—lose that which is the breath of my nostrils, the esteem, I mean, in which I am held by my brethren, and the hopes I have of succeeding to that mighty authority which is now wielded by the bigoted dotard Lucas de Beaumanoir, but of which I should make a far different use. Such is my certain doom, except I appear in arms against thy cause. Accursed be he of Goodalricke, who baited this trap for me! and doubly accursed Albert de Malvoisin, who withheld me from the resolution I had formed of hurling back the glove at the face of the superstitious and superannuated fool who listened to a charge so absurd, and against a creature so high in mind and so lovely in form as thou art!'

'And what now avails rant or flattery?' answered Rebecca. 'Thou hast made thy choice between causing to be shed the blood of an innocent woman, or of endangering thine own

earthly state and earthly hopes. What avails it to reckon together? thy choice is made.'

'No, Rebecca,' said the knight, in a softer tone, and drawing nearer towards her, 'my choice is NOT made; nay, mark, it is thine to make the election. If I appear in the lists, I must maintain my name in arms; and if I do so, championed or unchampioned, thou diest by the stake and faggot, for there lives not the knight who hath coped with me in arms on equal issue or on terms of vantage, save Richard Cœur-de-Lion and his minion of Ivanhoe. Ivanhoe, as thou well knowest, is unable to bear his corslet, and Richard is in a foreign prison. If I appear, then thou diest, even although thy charms should instigate some hot-headed youth to enter the lists in thy defence.'

'And what avails repeating 'his so often?' said Rebecca.

'Much,' replied the Templar; 'for thou must learn to look at thy fate on every side.'

'Well, then, turn the tapestry,' said the Jewess, 'and let me see the other side.'

'If I appear,' said Bois-Guilbert, 'in the fatal lists, thou diest by a slow and cruel death, in pain such as they say is destined to the guilty hereafter. But if I appear not, then am I a degraded and dishonoured knight, accused of witchcraft and of communion with infidels: the illustrious name which has grown yet more so under my wearing becomes a hissing and a reproach. I lose fame — I lose honour — I lose the prospect of such greatness as scarce emperors attain to; I sacrifice mighty ambition — I destroy schemes built as high as the mountains with which heathen say their heaven was once nearly scaled; and yet, Rebecca,' he added, throwing himself at her feet, 'this greatness will I sacrifice — this fame will I renounce — this power will I forego, even now when it is half within my grasp, if thou wilt say, "Bois-Guilbert, I receive thee for my lover."'

'Think not of such foolishness, Sir Knight,' answered Rebecca, 'but hasten to the Regent, the Queen Mother, and to Prince John; they cannot, in honour to the English crown, allow of the proceedings of your Grand Master. So shall you give me protection without sacrifice on your part, or the pretext of requiring any requital from me.'

'With these I deal not,' he continued, holding the train of her robe — 'it is thee only I address; and what can counter-balance thy choice? Bethink thee, were I a fiend, yet death is a worse, and it is death who is my rival.'

'I weigh not these evils,' said Rebecca, afraid to provoke the wild knight, yet equally determined neither to endure his passion nor even feign to endure it. 'Be a man, be a Christian! If indeed thy faith recommends that mercy which rather your tongues than your actions pretend, save me from this dreadful death, without seeking a requital which would change thy magnanimity into base barter.'

'No, damsel!' said the proud Templar, springing up, 'thou shalt not thus impose on me: if I renounce present fame and future ambition, I renounce it for thy sake, and we will escape in company. Listen to me, Rebecca,' he said, again softening his tone; 'England—Europe—is not the world. There are spheres in which we may act, ample enough even for my ambition. We will go to Palestine, where Conrade Marquis of Montserrat is my friend—a friend free as myself from the doting scruples which fetter our free-born reason: rather with Saladin will we league ourselves than endure the scorn of the bigots whom we condemn. I will form new paths to greatness,' he continued, again traversing the room with hasty strides; 'Europe shall hear the loud step of him she has driven from her sons! Not the millions whom her crusaders send to slaughter can do so much to defend Palestine; not the sabres of the thousands and ten thousands of Saracens can hew their way so deep into that land for which nations are striving, as the strength and policy of me and those brethren who, in despite of yonder old bigot, will adhere to me in good and evil. Thou shalt be a queen, Rebecca: on Mount Carmel shall we pitch the throne which my valour will gain for you, and I will exchange my long-desired baton for a sceptre!'

'A dream,' said Rebecca—'an empty vision of the night, which, were it a waking reality, affects me not. Enough, that the power which thou mightest acquire I will never share; nor hold I so light of country or religious faith as to esteem him who is willing to barter these ties, and cast away the bonds of the order of which he is a sworn member, in order to gratify an unruly passion for the daughter of another people. Put not a price on my deliverance, Sir Knight—sell not a deed of generosity—protect the oppressed for the sake of charity, and not for a selfish advantage. Go to the throne of England; Richard will listen to my appeal from these cruel men.'

'Never, Rebecca!' said the Templar, fiercely. 'If I renounce my order, for thee alone will I renounce it. Ambition shall remain mine, if thou refuse my love; I will not be fooled

on all hands. Stoop my crest to Richard? — ask a boon of that heart of pride? Never, Rebecca, will I place the order of the Temple at his feet in my person. I may forsake the order; I never will degrade or betray it.'

'Now God be gracious to me,' said Rebecca, 'for the succour of man is welnigh hopeless!'

'It is indeed,' said the Templar; 'for, proud as thou art, thou hast in me found thy match. If I enter the lists with my spear in rest, think not any human consideration shall prevent my putting forth my strength; and think then upon thine own fate — to die the dreadful death of the worst of criminals — to be consumed upon a blazing pile — dispersed to the elements of which our strange forms are so mystically composed — not a relic left of that graceful frame, from which we could say this lived and moved! Rebecca, it is not in woman to sustain this prospect — thou wilt yield to my suit.'

'Bois-Guilbert,' answered the Jewess, 'thou knowest not the heart of woman, or hast only conversed with those who are lost to her best feelings. I tell thee, proud Templar, that not in thy fiercest battles hast thou displayed more of thy vaunted courage than has been shown by woman when called upon to suffer by affection or duty. I am myself a woman, tenderly nurtured, naturally fearful of danger, and impatient of pain; yet, when we enter those fatal lists, thou to fight and I to suffer, I feel the strong assurance within me that my courage shall mount higher than thine. Farewell. I waste no more words on thee; the time that remains on earth to the daughter of Jacob must be otherwise spent: she must seek the Comforter, who may hide His face from His people, but who ever opens His ear to the cry of those who seek Him in sincerity and in truth.'

'We part then thus?' said the Templar, after a short pause; 'would to Heaven we had never met, or that thou hadst been noble in birth and Christian in faith! Nay, by Heaven! when I gaze on thee, and think when and how we are next to meet, I could even wish myself one of thine own degraded nation; my hand conversant with ingots and shekels, instead of spear and shield; my head bent down before each petty noble, and my look only terrible to the shivering and bankrupt debtor — this could I wish, Rebecca, to be near to thee in life, and to escape the fearful share I must have in thy death.'

'Thou hast spoken the Jew,' said Rebecca, 'as the persecution

of such as thou art has made him. Heaven in ire has driven him from his country, but industry has opened to him the only road to power and to influence which oppression has left unbarred. Read the ancient history of the people of God, and tell me if those by whom Jehovah wrought such marvels among the nations were then a people of misers and usurers! And know, proud knight, we number names amongst us to which your boasted northern nobility is as the gourd compared with the cedar—names that ascend far back to those high times when the Divine Presence shook the mercy-seat between the cherubim, and which derive their splendour from no earthly prince, but from the awful Voice which bade their fathers be nearest of the congregation to the Vision. Such were the princes of the House of Jacob.'

Rebecca's colour rose as she boasted the ancient glories of her race, but faded as she added, with a sigh, 'Such *were* the princes of Judah, now such no more! They are trampled down like the shorn grass, and mixed with the mire of the ways. Yet there are those among them who shame not such high descent, and of such shall be the daughter of Isaac the son of Adonikam! Farewell! I envy not thy blood-won honours; I envy not thy barbarous descent from Northern heathens; I envy thee not thy faith, which is ever in thy mouth but never in thy heart nor in thy practice.'

'There is a spell on me, by Heaven!' said Bois-Guilbert. 'I almost think yon besotted skeleton spoke truth, and that the reluctance with which I part from thee hath something in it more than is natural. Fair creature!' he said, approaching near her, but with great respect, 'so young, so beautiful, so fearless of death! and yet doomed to die, and with infamy and agony. Who would not weep for thee? The tear, that has been a stranger to these eyelids for twenty years, moistens them as I gaze on thee. But it must be—nothing may now save thy life. Thou and I are but the blind instruments of some irresistible fatality, that hurries us along, like goodly vessels driving before the storm, which are dashed against each other, and so perish. Forgive me, then, and let us part at least as friends part. I have assailed thy resolution in vain, and mine own is fixed as the adamant decrees of fate.'

'Thus,' said Rebecca, 'do men throw on fate the issue of their own wild passions. But I do forgive thee, Bois-Guilbert, though the author of my early death. There are noble things which cross over thy powerful mind; but it is the garden of

the sluggard, and the weeds have rushed up, and conspired to choke the fair and wholesome blossom.'

'Yes,' said the Templar, 'I am, Rebecca, as thou hast spoken me, untaught, untamed; and proud that, amidst a shoal of empty fools and crafty bigots, I have retained the pre-eminent fortitude that places me above them. I have been a child of battle from my youth upward, high in my views, steady and inflexible in pursuing them. Such must I remain—proud, inflexible, and unchanging; and of this the world shall have proof. But thou forgivest me, Rebecca?'

'As freely as ever victim forgave her executioner.'

'Farewell, then,' said the Templar, and left the apartment.

The preceptor Albert waited impatiently in an adjacent chamber the return of Bois-Guilbert.

'Thou hast tarried long,' he said; 'I have been as if stretched on red-hot iron with very impatience. What if the Grand Master, or his spy Conrade, had come hither? I had paid dear for my complaisance. But what ails thee, brother? Thy step totters, thy brow is as black as night. Art thou well, Bois-Guilbert?'

'Ay,' answered the Templar, 'as well as the wretch who is doomed to die within an hour. Nay, by the rood, not half so well; for there be those in such state who can lay down life like a cast-off garment. By Heaven, Malvoisin, yonder girl hath wellnigh unmanned me. I am half resolved to go to the Grand Master, abjure the order to his very teeth, and refuse to act the brutality which his tyranny has imposed on me.'

'Thou art mad,' answered Malvoisin; 'thou mayest thus indeed utterly ruin thyself, but canst not even find a chance thereby to save the life of this Jewess, which seems so precious in thine eyes. Beaumanoir will name another of the order to defend his judgment in thy place, and the accused will as assuredly perish as if thou hadst taken the duty imposed on thee.'

'Tis false; I will myself take arms in her behalf,' answered the Templar, haughtily; 'and should I do so, I think, Malvoisin, that thou knowest not one of the order who will keep his saddle before the point of my lance.'

'Ay, but thou forgettest,' said the wily adviser, 'thou wilt have neither leisure nor opportunity to execute this mad project. Go to Lucas Beaumanoir and say thou hast renounced thy vow of obedience, and see how long the despotic old man will leave thee in personal freedom. The words shall scarce

have left thy lips, ere thou wilt either be an hundred feet under ground, in the dungeon of the preceptory, to abide trial as a recreant knight; or, if his opinion holds concerning thy possession, thou wilt be enjoying straw, darkness, and chains in some distant convent cell, stunned with excruciations, and drenched with holy water, to expel the foul fiend which hath obtained dominion over thee. Thou must to the lists, Brian, or thou art a lost and dishonoured man.

'I will break forth and fly,' said Bois-Guilbert — 'fly to some distant land, to which folly and fanaticism have not yet found their way. No drop of the blood of this most excellent creature shall be spilled by my sanction.'

'Thou canst not fly,' said the preceptor: 'thy ravings have excited suspicion, and thou wilt not be permitted to leave the preceptory. Go and make the essay: present thyself before the gate, and command the bridge to be lowered, and mark what answer thou shalt receive. Thou art surprised and offended; but is it not the better for thee? Wert thou to fly, what would ensue but the reversal of thy arms, the dishonour of thine ancestry, the degradation of thy rank? Think on it. Where shall thine old companions in arms hide their heads when Brian de Bois-Guilbert, the best lance of the Templars, is proclaimed recreant, amid the hisses of the assembled people? What grief will be at the Court of France! With what joy will the haughty Richard hear the news, that the knight that set him hard in Palestine, and wellnigh darkened his renown, has lost fame and honour for a Jewish girl, whom he could not even save by so costly a sacrifice!'

'Malvoisin,' said the Knight, 'I thank thee — thou hast touched the string at which my heart most readily thrills: Come of it what may, recreant shall never be added to the name of Bois-Guilbert. Would to God, Richard, or any of his vaunting minions of England, would appear in these lists: But they will be empty — no one will risk to break a lance for the innocent, the forlorn.'

'The better for thee, if it prove so,' said the preceptor: 'if no champion appears, it is not by thy means that this unlucky damsel shall die, but by the doom of the Grand Master, with whom rests all the blame, and who will count that blame for praise and commendation.'

'True,' said Bois-Guilbert; 'if no champion appears, I am but a part of the pageant, sitting indeed on horseback in the lists, but having no part in what is to follow.'

'None whatever,' said Malvoisin - 'no more than the armed image of St. George when it makes part of a procession.'

'Well, I will resume my resolution,' replied the haughty Templar. 'She has despised me - repulsed me - reviled me; and wherefore should I offer up for her whatever of estimation I have in the opinion of others? Malvoisin, I will appear in the lists.'

He left the apartment hastily as he uttered these words, and the preceptor followed, to watch and confirm him in his resolution; for in Bois-Guilbert's fame he had himself a strong interest, expecting much advantage from his being one day at the head of the order, not to mention the preferment of which Mont-Fitchet had given him hopes, on condition he would forward the condemnation of the unfortunate Rebecca. Yet although, in combating his friend's better feelings, he possessed all the advantage which a wily, composed, selfish disposition has over a man agitated by strong and contending passions, it required all Malvoisin's art to keep Bois-Guilbert steady to the purpose he had prevailed on him to adopt. He was obliged to watch him closely to prevent his resuming his purpose of flight, to intercept his communication with the Grand Master, lest he should come to an open rupture with his superior, and to renew, from time to time, the various arguments by which he endeavoured to show that, in appearing as champion on this occasion, Bois-Guilbert, without either accelerating or ensuring the fate of Rebecca, would follow the only course by which he could save himself from degradation and disgrace.

CHAPTER XL

Shadows avant ! — Richard's himself again.

Richard III.

WHEN the Black Knight — for it becomes necessary to resume the train of his adventures — left the trysting-tree of the generous outlaw, he held his way straight to a neighbouring religious house, of small extent and revenue, called the priory of St. Botolph, to which the wounded Ivanhoe had been removed when the castle was taken, under the guidance of the faithful Gurth and the magnanimous Wamba. It is unnecessary at present to mention what took place in the interim betwixt Wilfred and his deliverer; suffice it to say that, after long and grave communication, messengers were despatched by the prior in several directions, and that on the succeeding morning the Black Knight was about to set forth on his journey, accompanied by the jester, Wamba, who attended as his guide.

'We will meet,' he said to Ivanhoe, 'at Coningsburgh, the castle of the deceased Athelstane, since there thy father Cedric holds the funeral feast for his noble relation. I would see your Saxon kindred together, Sir Wilfred, and become better acquainted with them than heretofore. Thou also wilt meet me; and it shall be my task to reconcile thee to thy father.'

So saying, he took an affectionate farewell of Ivanhoe, who expressed an anxious desire to attend upon his deliverer. But the Black Knight would not listen to the proposal.

'Rest this day; thou wilt have scarce strength enough to travel on the next. I will have no guide with me but honest Wamba, who can play priest or fool as I shall be most in the humour.'

'And I,' said Wamba, 'will attend you with all my heart. I would fain see the feasting at the funeral of Athelstane; for, if it be not full and frequent, he will rise from the dead to rebuke cook, sewer, and cupbearer; and that were a sight worth

seeing. Always, Sir Knight, I will trust your valour with making my excuse to my master Cedric, in case mine own wit should fail.'

'And how should my poor valour succeed, Sir Jester, when thy light wit halts? resolve me that.'

'Wit, Sir Knight,' replied the Jester, 'may do much. He is a quick, apprehensive knave, who sees his neighbour's blind side, and knows how to keep the lee-gage when his passions are blowing high. But valour is a sturdy fellow, that makes all split. He rows against both wind and tide, and makes way notwithstanding; and, therefore, good Sir Knight, while I take advantage of the fair weather in our noble master's temper, I will expect you to bestir yourself when it grows rough.'

'Sir Knight of the Pettorlock, since it is your pleasure so to be distinguished,' said Ivanhoe, 'I fear me you have chosen a talkative and a troublesome fool to be your guide. But he knows every path and alley in the woods as well as e'er a hunter who frequents them; and the poor knave, as thou hast partly seen, is as faithful as steel.'

'Nay,' said the Knight, 'an he have the gift of showing my road, I shall not grumble with him that he desires to make it pleasant. Fare thee well, kind Wilfred; I charge thee not to attempt to travel till to-morrow at earliest.'

So saying, he extended his hand to Ivanhoe, who pressed it to his lips, took leave of the prior, mounted his horse, and departed, with Wamba for his companion. Ivanhoe followed them with his eyes until they were lost in the shades of the surrounding forest, and then returned into the convent.

But shortly after matin-song he requested to see the prior. The old man came in haste, and inquired anxiously after the state of his health.

'It is better,' he said, 'than my fondest hope could have anticipated; either my wound has been slighter than the effusion of blood led me to suppose, or this balsam hath wrought a wonderful cure upon it. I feel already as if I could bear my corslet; and so much the better, for thoughts pass in my mind which render me unwilling to remain here longer in inactivity.'

'Now, the saints forbid,' said the prior, 'that the son of the Saxon Cedric should leave our convent ere his wounds were healed! It were shame to our profession were we to suffer it.'

'Nor would I desire to leave your hospitable roof, venerable father,' said Ivanhoe, 'did I not feel myself able to endure the journey, and compelled to undertake it.'

'And what can have urged you to so sudden a departure?' said the prior.

'Have you never, holy father,' answered the knight, 'felt an apprehension of approaching evil, for which you in vain attempted to assign a cause? Have you never found your mind darkened, like the sunny landscape, by the sudden cloud, which augurs a coming tempest? And thinkest thou not that such impulses are deserving of attention, as being the hints of our guardian spirits that danger is impending?'

'I may not deny,' said the prior, crossing himself, 'that such things have been, and have been of Heaven; but then such communications have had a visibly useful scope and tendency. But thou, wounded as thou art, what avails it thou shouldst follow the steps of him whom thou couldst not aid, were he to be assaulted?'

'Prior,' said Ivanhoe, 'thou dost mistake—I am stout enough to exchange buffets with any who will challenge me to such a traffic. But were it otherwise, may I not aid him, were he in danger, by other means than by force of arms? It is but too well known that the Saxons love not the Norman race, and who knows what may be the issue if he break in upon them when their hearts are irritated by the death of Athelstane, and their heads heated by the carousal in which they will indulge themselves? I hold his entrance among them at such a moment most perilous, and I am resolved to share or avert the danger: which, that I may the better do, I would crave thee the use of some palfrey whose pace may be softer than that of my *destrier*.¹

'Surely,' said the worthy churchman; 'you shall have mine own ambling jennet, and I would it ambled as easy for your sake as that of the abbot of St. Alban's. Yet this will I say for Malkin, for so I call her, that unless you were to borrow a ride on the juggler's steed that paces a hornpipe amongst the eggs, you could not go a journey on a creature so gentle and smooth-paced. I have composed many a homily on her back, to the edification of my brethren of the convent and many poor Christian souls.'

'I pray you, reverend father,' said Ivanhoe, 'let Malkin be got ready instantly, and bid Gurth attend me with mine arms.'

'Nay but, fair sir,' said the prior, 'I pray you to remember that Malkin hath as little skill in arms as her master, and that I warrant not her enduring the sight or weight of your full panoply. O, Malkin, I promise you, is a beast of judgment,

¹ *Destrier* — war-horse.

and will contend against an undue weight. I did but borrow the *Fructus Temporum* from the priest of St. Bee's, and I promise you she would not stir from the gate until I had exchanged the huge volume for my little breviary.'

'Trust me, holy father,' said Ivanhoe, 'I will not distress her with too much weight; and if she calls a combat with me, it is odds but she has the worst.'

This reply was made while Gurth was buckling on the knight's heels a pair of large gilded spurs, capable of convincing any restive horse that his best safety lay in being conformable to the will of his rider.

The deep and sharp rowels with which Ivanhoe's heels were now armed began to make the worthy prior repent of his courtesy, and ejaculate, 'Nay but, fair sir, now I bethink me, my Malkin abideth not the spur. Better it were that you tarry for the mare of our manciple down at the grange, which may be had in little more than an hour, and cannot but be tractable, in respect that she draweth much of our winter firewood, and eateth no corn.'

'I thank you, reverend father, but will abide by your first offer, as I see Malkin is already led forth to the gate. Gurth shall carry mine armour; and for the rest, rely on it that, as I will not overload Malkin's back, she shall not overcome my patience. And now, farewell!'

Ivanhoe now descended the stairs more hastily and easily than his wound promised, and threw himself upon the jennet, eager to escape the importunity of the prior, who stuck as closely to his side as his age and fatness would permit, now singing the praises of Malkin, now recommending caution to the knight in managing her.

'She is at the most dangerous period for maidens as well as mares,' said the old man, laughing at his own jest, 'being barely in her fifteenth year.'

Ivanhoe, who had other web to weave than to stand canvassing a palfrey's paces with its owner, lent but a deaf ear to the prior's grave advices and facetious jests, and having leapt on his mare, and commanded his squire (for such Gurth now called himself) to keep close by his side, he followed the track of the Black Knight into the forest, while the prior stood at the gate of the convent looking after him, and ejaculating, 'St. Mary! how prompt and fiery be these men of war! I would I had not trusted Malkin to his keeping, for, crippled as I am with the cold rheum, I am undone if aught but good befalls

her. And yet,' said he, recollecting himself, 'as I would not spare my own old and disabled limbs in the good cause of Old England, so Malkin must e'en run her hazard on the same venture; and it may be they will think our poor house worthy of some munificent guerdon; or, it may be, they will send the old prior a pacing nag. And if they do none of these, as great men will forget little men's service, truly I shall hold me well repaid in having done that which is right. And it is now well-nigh the fitting time to summon the brethren to breakfast in the refectory. Ah! I doubt they obey that call more cheerily than the bells for primes and matins.'

So the prior of St. Botolph's hobbled back again into the refectory, to preside over the stock-fish and ale which were just serving out for the friars' breakfast. Pury and important, he sat him down at the table, and many a dark word he threw out of benefits to be expected to the convent, and high deeds of service done by himself, which at another season would have attracted observation. But as the stock-fish was highly salted, and the ale reasonably powerful, the jaws of the brethren were too anxiously employed to admit of their making much use of their ears; nor do we read of any of the fraternity who was tempted to speculate upon the mysterious hints of their superior, except Father Diggory, who was severely afflicted by the tooth-ache, so that he could only eat on one side of his jaws.

In the meantime, the Black Champion and his guide were pacing at their leisure through the recesses of the forest; the good Knight whiles humming to himself the lay of some enamoured troubadour, sometimes encouraging by questions the prating disposition of his attendant, so that their dialogue formed a whimsical mixture of song and jest, of which we would fain give our readers some idea. You are then to imagine this Knight, such as we have already described him, strong of person, tall, broad-shouldered, and large of bone, mounted on his mighty black charger, which seemed made on purpose to bear his weight, so easily he paced forward under it, having the visor of his helmet raised, in order to admit freedom of breath, yet keeping the beaver, or under part, closed, so that his features could be but imperfectly distinguished. But his ruddy, embrowned cheek-bones could be plainly seen, and the large and bright blue eyes, that flashed from under the dark shade of the raised visor; and the whole gesture and look of the champion expressed careless gaiety and fearless confidence -- a

mind which was unapt to apprehend danger, and prompt to defy it when most imminent, yet with whom danger was a familiar thought, as with one whose trade was war and adventure.

The Jester wore his usual fantastic habit, but late accidents had led him to adopt a good cutting falchion, instead of his wooden sword, with a targe to match it; of both which weapons he had, notwithstanding his profession, shown himself a skilful master during the storming of Torquilstone. Indeed, the infirmity of Wamba's brain consisted chiefly in a kind of impatient irritability, which suffered him not long to remain quiet in any posture, or adhere to any certain train of ideas, although he was for a few minutes alert enough in performing any immediate task, or in apprehending any immediate topic. On horseback, therefore, he was perpetually swinging himself backwards and forwards, now on the horse's ears, then anon on the very rump of the animal; now hanging both his legs on one side, and now sitting with his face to the tail, moping, mowing, and making a thousand apish gestures, until his palfrey took his freaks so much to heart as fairly to lay him at his length on the green grass — an incident which greatly amused the Knight, but compelled his companion to ride more steadily thereafter.

At the point of their journey at which we take them up, this joyous pair were engaged in singing a virelai, as it was called, in which the clown bore a mellow burden to the better-instructed Knight of the Fetterlock. And thus run the ditty: —

Anna Marie, love, up is the sun,
Anna Marie, love, morn is begun,
Mists are dispersing, love, birds singing free,
Up in the morning, love, Anna Marie.
Anna Marie, love, up in the morn,
The hunter is winding blithe sounds on his horn,
The echo rings merry from rock and from tree,
'Tis time to arouse thee, love, Anna Marie.

WAMBA.

O Tybalt, love, Tybalt, awake me not yet,
Around my soft pillow while softer dreams flit,
For what are the joys that in waking we prove,
Compared with these visions, O, Tybalt, my love?
Let the birds to the rise of the mist carol shrill,
Let the hunter blow out his loud horn on the hill,
Softer sounds, softer pleasures, in slumber I prove, —
But think not I dreamt of thee, Tybalt, my love.

'A dainty song,' said Wamba, when they had finished their carol, 'and I swear by my bauble, a pretty moral! I used to

sing it with Gurth, once my playfellow, and now, by the grace of God and his master, no less than a freeman ; and we once came by the cudgel for being so entranced by the melody that we lay in bed two hours after sunrise, singing the ditty betwixt sleeping and waking : my bones ache at thinking of the tune ever since. Nevertheless, I have played the part of Anna Marie to please you, fair sir.'

The Jester next struck into another carol, a sort of comic ditty, to which the Knight, catching up the tune, replied in the like manner.

KNIGHT AND WAMBA.

There came three merry men from south, west, and north,
Ever more sing the roundelay ;
To win the Widow of Wycombe forth,
And where was the widow might say them nay ?

The first was a knight, and from Tynedale he came,
Ever more sing the roundelay ;
And his fathers, God save us, were men of great fame,
And where was the widow might say him nay ?

Of his father the laird, of his uncle the squire,
He boasted in rhyme and in roundelay ;
She bade him go bask by his sea-coal fire,
For she was the widow would say him nay.

WAMBA.

The next that came forth, swore by blood and by nails,
Merrily sing the roundelay ;
Hur's a gentleman, God wot, and hur's lineage was of Wales,
And where was the widow might say him nay ?

Sir David ap Morgan ap Griffith ap Hugh
Ap Tudor ap Rhice, quoth his roundelay ;
She said that one widow for so many was too few,
And she bade the Welshman wend his way.

But then next came a yeoman, a yeoman of Kent,
Jollily singing his roundelay ;
He spoke to the widow of living and rent,
And where was the widow could say him nay ?

BOTH.

So the knight and the squire were both left in the mire,
There for to sing their roundelay ;
For a yeoman of Kent, with his yearly rent,
There never was a widow could say him nay.

'I would, Wamba,' said the Knight, 'that our host of the trysting-tree, or the jolly Friar, his chaplain, heard this thy ditty in praise of our bluff yeoman.'

'So would not I,' said Wamba, 'but for the horn that hangs at your baldric.'

'Ay,' said the Knight, 'this is a pledge of Locksley's goodwill, though I am not like to need it. Three mots on this bugle will, I am assured, bring round, at our need, a jolly band of yonder honest yeomen.'

'I would say, Heaven forefend,' said the Jester, 'were it not that that fair gift is a pledge they would let us pass peaceably.'

'Why, what meanest thou?' said the Knight; 'thinkest thou that but for this pledge of fellowship they would assault us?'

'Nay, for me I say nothing,' said Wamba; 'for green trees have ears as well as stone walls. But canst thou construe me this, Sir Knight? When is thy wine-pitcher and thy purse better empty than full?'

'Why, never, I think,' replied the Knight.

'Thou never deservest to have a full one in thy hand, for so simple an answer! Thou hadst best empty thy pitcher ere thou pass it to a Saxon, and leave thy money at home ere thou walk in the greenwood.'

'You hold our friends for robbers, then?' said the Knight of the Fetterlock.

'You hear me not say so, fair sir,' said Wamba. 'It may relieve a poor man's steed to take off his mail when he hath a long journey to make; and, certes, it may do good to the rider's soul to ease him of that which is the root of all evil; therefore will I give no hard names to those who do such services. Only I would wish my mail at home, and my purse in my chamber, when I meet with these good fellows, because it may save them some trouble.'

'We are bound to pray for them, my friend, notwithstanding the fair character thou dost afford them.'

'Pray for them with all my heart,' said Wamba; 'but in the town, not in the greenwood, like the abbot of St. Bee's, whom they caused to say mass with an old hollow oak-tree for his stall.'

'Say as thou list, Wamba,' replied the Knight, 'these yeomen did thy master Cedric yeomanly service at Torquilstone.'

'Ay, truly,' answered Wamba; 'but that was in the fashion of their trade with Heaven.'

'Their trade, Wamba! how mean you to that?' replied his companion.

'Marry, thus,' said the Jester. 'They make up a balanced account with Heaven, as our old cellarer used to call his ciphering, as fair as Isaac the Jew keeps with his debtors, and, like him, give out a very little, and take large credit for doing so; reckoning, doubtless, on their own behalf the sevenfold usury which the blessed text hath promised to charitable loans.'

'Give me an example of your meaning, Wamba; I know nothing of ciphers or rates of usage,' answered the Knight.

'Why,' said Wamba, 'an your valour be so dull, you will please to learn that those honest fellows balance a good deed with one not quite so laudable, as a crown given to a begging friar with an hundred byzants taken from a fat abbot, or a wench kissed in the greenwood with the relief of a poor widow.'

'Which of these was the good deed, which was the felony?' interrupted the Knight.

'A good gibe! a good gibe!' said Wamba; 'keeping witty company sharpeneth the apprehension. You said nothing so well, Sir Knight, I will be sworn, when you held drunken vespers with the bluff hermit. But to go on. — The merry men of the forest set off the building of a cottage with the burning of a castle, the thatching of a choir against the robbing of a church, the setting free a poor prisoner against the murder of a proud sheriff, or, to come nearer to our point, the deliverance of a Saxon franklin against the burning alive of a Norman baron. Gentle thieves they are, in short, and courteous robbers; but it is ever the luckiest to meet with them when they are at the worst.'

'How so, Wamba?' said the Knight.

'Why, then they have some compunction, and are for making up matters with Heaven. But when they have struck an even balance, Heaven help them with whom they next open the account! The travellers who first met them after their good service at Torquilstone would have a woeful flaying. And yet,' said Wamba, coming close up to the Knight's side, 'there be companions who are far more dangerous for travellers to meet than yonder outlaws.'

'And who may they be, for you have neither bears nor wolves, I trow?' said the Knight.

'Marry, sir, but we have Malvoisin's men-at-arms,' said Wamba; 'and let me tell you that, in time of civil war, a halfscore of these is worth a band of wolves at any time. They are now expecting their harvest, and are reinforced with the

soldiers that escaped from Torquilstone; so that, should we meet with a band of them, we are like to pay for our feats of arms. Now, I pray you, Sir Knight, what would you do if we met two of them ?

'Pin the villains to the earth with my lance, Wamba, if they offered us any impediment.'

'But what if there were four of them ?'

'They should drink of the same cup,' answered the Knight.

'What if six,' continued Wamba, 'and we as we now are, barely two; would you not remember Locksley's horn ?'

'What! sound for aid,' exclaimed the Knight, 'against a score of such rascaille as these, whom one good knight could drive before him, as the wind drives the withered leaves ?'

'Nay, then,' said Wamba, 'I will pray you for a close sight of that same horn that hath so powerful a breath.'

The Knight undid the clasp of the baldric, and indulged his fellow-traveller, who immediately hung the bugle round his own neck.

'Tra-lira-la,' said he, whistling the notes; 'nay, I know my gamut as well as another.'

'How mean you, knave ?' said the Knight; 'restore me the bugle.'

'Content you, Sir Knight, it is in safe keeping. When valour and folly travel, folly should bear the horn, because she can blow the best.'

'Nay but, rogue,' said the Black Knight, 'this exceedeth thy license. Beware ye tamper not with my patience.'

'Urge me not with violence, Sir Knight,' said the Jester, keeping at a distance from the impatient champion, 'or folly will show a clean pair of heels, and leave valour to find out his way through the wood as best he may.'

'Nay, thou hast hit me there,' said the Knight; 'and, sooth to say, I have little time to jangle with thee. Keep the horn an thou wilt, but let us proceed on our journey.'

'You will not harm me, then ?' said Wamba.

'I tell thee no, thou knave !'

'Ay, but pledge me your knightly word for it,' continued Wamba, as he approached with great caution.

'My knightly word I pledge; only come on with thy foolish self.'

'Nay, then, valour and folly are once more boon companions,' said the Jester, coming up frankly to the Knight's side; 'but, in truth, I love not such buffets as that you bestowed on the

burly Friar, when his holiness rolled on the green like a king of the nine-pins. And now that folly wears the horn, let valour rouse himself and shake his mane; for, if I mistake not, there are company in yonder brake that are on the look-out for us.'

'What makes thee judge so?' said the Knight.

'Because I have twice or thrice noticed the glance of a morrion from amongst the green leaves. Had they been honest men, they had kept the path. But yonder thicket is a choice chapel for the clerks of St. Nicholas.'

'By my faith,' said the Knight, closing his visor, 'I think thou be'st in the right on't.'

And in good time did he close it, for three arrows flew at the same instant from the suspected spot against his head and breast, one of which would have penetrated to the brain, had it not been turned aside by the steel visor. The other two were averted by the gorget, and by the shield which hung around his neck.

'Thanks, trusty armourer,' said the Knight. 'Wamba, let us close with them,' and he rode straight to the thicket. He was met by six or seven men-at-arms, who ran against him with their lances at full career. Three of the weapons struck against him, and splintered with as little effect as if they had been driven against a tower of steel. The Black Knight's eyes seemed to flash fire even through the aperture of his visor. He raised himself in his stirrups with an air of inexpressible dignity, and exclaimed, 'What means this, my masters!' The men made no other reply than by drawing their swords and attacking him on every side, crying, 'Die, tyrant!'

'Ha! St. Edward! Ha! St. George!' said the Black Knight, striking down a man at every invocation; 'have we traitors here!'

His opponents, desperate as they were, bore back from an arm which carried death in every blow, and it seemed as if the terror of his single strength was about to gain the battle against such odds, when a knight, in blue armour, who had hitherto kept himself behind the other assailants, spurred forward with his lance, and taking aim, not at the rider but at the steed, wounded the noble animal mortally.

'That was a felon stroke!' exclaimed the Black Knight, as the steed fell to the earth, bearing his rider along with him.

And at this moment Wamba winded the bugle, for the whole had passed so speedily that he had not time to do so

sooner. The sudden sound made the murderers hear back once more, and Wamba, though so imperfectly weaponed, did not hesitate to rush in and assist the Black Knight to rise.

'Shame on ye, false cowards!' exclaimed he in the blue harness, who seemed to lead the assailants, 'do ye fly from the empty blast of a horn blown by a jester!'

Animated by his words, they attacked the Black Knight anew, whose best refuge was now to place his back against an oak, and defend himself with his sword. The felon knight, who had taken another spear, watching the moment when his formidable antagonist was most closely pressed, galloped against him in hopes to nail him with his lance against the tree, when his purpose was again intercepted by Wamba. The Jester, making up by agility the want of strength, and little noticed by the men-at-arms, who were busied in their more important object, hovered on the skirts of the fight, and effectually checked the fatal career of the Blue Knight, by hamstringing his horse with a stroke of his sword. Horse and man went to the ground; yet the situation of the Knight of the Fetterlock continued very precarious, as he was pressed close by several men completely armed, and began to be fatigued by the violent exertions necessary to defend himself on so many points at nearly the same moment, when a grey-goose shaft suddenly stretched on the earth one of the most formidable of his assailants, and a band of yeomen broke forth from the glade, headed by Locksley and the jovial Friar, who, taking ready and effectual part in the fray, soon disposed of the ruffians, all of whom lay on the spot dead or mortally wounded. The Black Knight thanked his deliverers with a dignity they had not observed in his former bearing, which hitherto had seemed rather that of a blunt, bold soldier than of a person of exalted rank.

'It concerns me much,' he said, 'even before I express my full gratitude to my ready friends, to discover, if I may, who have been my unprovoked enemies. Open the visor of that Blue Knight, Wamba, who seems the chief of these villains.'

The Jester instantly made up to the leader of the assassins, who, bruised by his fall, and entangled under the wounded steed, lay incapable either of flight or resistance.

'Come, valiant sir,' said Wamba, 'I must be your armourer as well as your equerry. I have dismounted you, and now I will unhelm you.'

So saying, with no very gentle hand he undid the helmet of the Blue Knight, which, rolling to a distance on the grass,

displayed to the Knight of the Fetterlock grizzled looks, and a countenance he did not expect to have seen under such circumstances.

'Waldemar Fitzurse!' he said in astonishment; 'what could urge one of thy rank and seeming worth to so foul an undertaking?'

'Richard,' said the captive knight, looking up to him, 'thou knowest little of mankind, if thou knowest not to what ambition and revenge can lead every child of Adam.'

'Revenge!' answered the Black Knight; 'I never wronged thee. On me thou hast nought to revenge.'

'My daughter, Richard, whose alliance thou didst scorn — was that no injury to a Norman, whose blood is noble as thine own?'

'Thy daughter!' replied the Black Knight. 'A proper cause of enmity, and followed up to a bloody issue! Stand back, my masters, I would speak to him alone. And now, Waldemar Fitzurse, say me the truth: confess who set thee on this traitorous deed.'

'Thy father's son,' answered Waldemar, 'who, in so doing, did but avenge on thee thy disobedience to thy father.'

Richard's eyes sparkled with indignation, but his better nature overcame it. He pressed his hand against his brow, and remained an instant gazing on the face of the humbled baron, in whose features pride was contending with shame.

'Thou dost not ask thy life, Waldemar?' said the King.

'He that is in the lion's clutch,' answered Fitzurse, 'knows it were needless.'

'Take it, then, unasked,' said Richard; 'the lion preys not on prostrate carcasses. Take thy life, but with this condition, that in three days thou shalt leave England, and go to hide thine infamy in thy Norman castle, and that thou wilt never mention the name of John of Anjou as connected with thy felony. If thou art found on English ground after the space I have allotted thee, thou diest; or if thou breathest aught that can attain the honour of my house, by St. George! not the altar itself shall be a sanctuary. I will hang thee out to feed the ravens from the very pinnacle of thine own castle. Let this knight have a steed, Locksley, for I see your yeomen have caught those which were running loose, and let him depart unharmed.'

'But that I judge I listen to a voice whose behests must not be disputed,' answered the yeoman, 'I would send a shaft

after the skulking villain that should spare him the labour of a long journey.'

'Thou bearest an English heart, Locksley,' said the Black Knight, 'and well dost judge thou art the more bound to obey my behest: I am Richard of England!'

At these words, pronounced in a tone of majesty suited to the high rank, and no less distinguished character, of *Cœur-de-Lion*, the yeomen at once kneeled down before him, and at the same time tendered their allegiance, and implored pardon for their offences.

'Rise, my friends,' said Richard, in a gracious tone, looking on them with a countenance in which his habitual good-humour had already conquered the blaze of hasty resentment, and whose features retained no mark of the late desperate conflict, excepting the flush arising from exertion — 'arise,' he said, 'my friends! Your misdemeanours, whether in forest or field, have been atoned by the loyal services you rendered my distressed subjects before the walls of Torquilstone, and the rescue you have this day afforded to your sovereign. Arise, my liegemen, and be good subjects in future. And thou, brave Locksley —'

'Call me no longer Locksley, my Liege, but know me under the name which, I fear, fame hath blown too widely not to have reached even your royal ears: I am Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest.'

'King of outlaws, and Prince of good fellows!' said the King, 'who hath not heard a name that has been borne as far as Palestine? But be assured, brave outlaw, that no deed done in our absence, and in the turbulent times to which it hath given rise, shall be remembered to thy disadvantage.'

'True says the proverb,' said Wamba, interposing his word, but with some abatement of his usual petulance —

'When the cat is away,
The mice will play.'

'What, Wamba, art thou there?' said Richard; 'I have been so long of hearing thy voice, I thought thou hadst taken flight.'

'I take flight!' said Wamba; 'when do you ever find folly separated from valour? There lies the trophy of my sword, that good grey gelding, whom I heartily wish upon his legs again, conditioning his master lay there houghed in his place. It is true, I gave a little ground at first, for a motley jacket does not brook lance-heads as a steel doublet will. But if I fought

¹ See Locksley. Note 26.

not at sword's point, you will grant me that I sounded the onset.'

'And to good purpose, honest Wamba,' replied the King. 'Thy good service shall not be forgotten.'

'*Confiteor! confiteor!*' exclaimed, in a submissive tone, a voice near the King's side: 'my Latin will carry me no farther, but I confess my deadly treason, and pray leave to have absolution before I am led to execution!'

Richard looked around, and beheld the jovial Friar on his knees, telling his rosary, while his quarter-staff, which had not been idle during the skirmish, lay on the grass beside him. His countenance was gathered so as he thought might best express the most profound contrition, his eyes being turned up, and the corners of his mouth drawn down, as Wamba expressed it, like the tassels at the mouth of a purse. Yet this demure affectation of extreme penitence was whimsically belied by a ludicrous meaning which lurked in his huge features, and seemed to pronounce his fear and repentance alike hypocritical.

'For what art thou cast down, mad priest?' said Richard; 'art thou afraid thy diocesan should learn how truly thou dost serve Our Lady and St. Dunstan? Tush, man! fear it not; Richard of England betrays no secrets that pass over the flagon.'

'Nay, most gracious sovereign,' answered the hermit, well known to the curious in penny histories of Robin Hood by the name of Friar Tuck, 'it is not the crosier I fear, but the sceptre. Alas! that my sacrilegious fist should ever have been applied to the ear of the Lord's anointed!'

'Ha! ha!' said Richard, 'sits the wind there? In truth, I had forgotten the buffet, though mine ear sung after it for a whole day. But if the cuff was fairly given, I will be judged by the good men around, if it was not as well repaid: or, if thou thinkest I still owe thee aught, and will stand forth for another counterbuff——'

'By no means,' replied Friar Tuck, 'I had mine own returned, and with usury: may your Majesty ever pay your debts as fully!'

'If I would do so with cuffs,' said the King, 'my creditors should have little reason to complain of an empty exchequer.'

'And yet,' said the Friar, resuming his demure, hypocritical countenance, 'I know not what penance I ought to perform for that most sacrilegious blow——!'

'Speak no more of it, brother,' said the King; 'after having stood so many cuffs from paynims and misbelievers, I were void of reason to quarrel with the buffet of a clerk so holy as he of Copmanhurst. Yet, mine honest Friar, I think it would be best both for the church and thyself that I should procure a license to unfrock thee, and retain thee as a yeoman of our guard, serving in care of our person, as formerly in attendance upon the altar of St. Dunstan.'

'My Liege,' said the Friar, 'I humbly crave your pardon; and you would readily grant my excuse, did you but know how the sin of laziness has beset me. St. Dunstan—may he be gracious to us!—stands quiet in his niche, though I should forget my orisons in killing a fat buck; I stay out of my cell sometimes a night, doing I wot not what—St. Dunstan never complains—a quiet master he is, and a peaceful, as ever was made of wood. But to be a yeoman in attendance on my sovereign the King—the honour is great, doubtless—yet, if I were but to step aside to comfort a widow in one corner, or to kill a deer in another, it would be, "Where is the dog priest?"' says one. "Who has seen the accursed Tuck?" says another. "The unfrocked villain destroys more venison than half the country besides," says one keeper; "And is hunting after every shy doe in the country!" quoth a second. In fine, good my Liege, I pray you to leave me as you found me; or, if in aught you desire to extend your benevolence to me, that I may be considered as the poor clerk of St. Dunstan's cell in Copmanhurst, to whom any small donation will be most thankfully acceptable.'

'I understand thee,' said the King, 'and the holy clerk shall have a grant of vert and venison in my woods of Wharncliffe. Mark, however, I will but assign thee three bucks every season; but if that do not prove an apology for thy slaying thirty, I am no Christian knight nor true king.'

'Your Grace may be well assured,' said the Friar, 'that, with the grace of St. Dunstan I shall find the way of multiplying your most bounteous gift.'

'I nothing doubt it,' good brother,' said the King; 'and as venison is but dry food, our cellarer shall have orders to deliver to thee a butt of sack, a rundet of Malvoisie, and three hogsheads of ale of the first strike, yearly. If that will not quench thy thirst, thou must come to court, and become acquainted with my butler.'

'But for St. Dunstan?' said the Friar—

'A cope, a stole, and an altar-cloth shalt thou also have,' continued the King, crossing himself. 'But we may not turn our game into earnest, lest God punish us for thinking more on our follies than on His honour and worship.'

'I will answer for my patron,' said the priest, joyously.

'Answer for thyself, Friar,' said King Richard, something sternly; but immediately stretching out his hand to the hermit, the latter, somewhat abashed, bent his knee, and saluted it. 'Thou dost less honour to my extended palm than to my clenched fist,' said the monarch; 'thou didst only kneel to the one, and to the other didst prostrate thyself.'

But the Friar, afraid perhaps of again giving offence by continuing the conversation in too jocose a style—a false step to be particularly guarded against by those who converse with monarchs—bowed profoundly, and fell into the rear.

At the same time, two additional personages appeared on the scene.

CHAPTER XLI

All hail to the lordlings of high degree,
Who live not more happy, though greater than we !
Our pastimes to see,
Under every green tree,
In all the gay woodland, right welcome ye be.

MACDONALD.

THE new-comers were Wilfred of Ivanhoe, on the prior of Botolph's palfrey, and Gurth, who attended him, on the knight's own war-horse. The astonishment of Ivanhoe was beyond bounds when he saw his master besprinkled with blood, and six or seven dead bodies lying around in the little glade in which the battle had taken place. Nor was he less surprised to see Richard surrounded by so many silvan attendants, the outlaws, as they seemed to be, of the forest, and a perilous retinue therefore for a prince. He hesitated whether to address the King as the Black Knight-errant, or in what other manner to demean himself towards him. Richard saw his embarrassment.

'Fear not, Wilfred,' he said, 'to address Richard Plantagenet as himself, since thou seest him in the company of true English hearts, although it may be they have been urged a few steps aside by warm English blood.'

'Sir Wilfred of Ivanhoe,' said the gallant outlaw, stepping forward, 'my assurances can add nothing to those of our sovereign; yet, let me say somewhat proudly, that of men who have suffered much, he hath not truer subjects than those who now stand around him.'

'I cannot doubt it, brave man,' said Wilfred, 'since thou art of the number. But what mean these marks of death and danger — these slain men, and the bloody armour of my Prince?'

'Treason hath been with us, Ivanhoe,' said the King; 'but, thanks to these brave men, treason hath met its meed. But,

now I bethink me, thou too art a traitor,' said Richard, smiling — 'a most disobedient traitor; for were not our orders positive that thou shouldst repose thyself at St. Botolph's until thy wound was healed?'

'It is healed,' said Ivanhoe — 'it is not of more consequence than the scratch of a bodkin. But why — oh why, noble Prince, will you thus vex the hearts of your faithful servants, and expose your life by lonely journeys and rash adventures, as if it were of no more value than that of a mere knight-errant, who has no interest on earth but what lance and sword may procure him?'

'And Richard Plantagenet,' said the King, 'desires no more fame than his good lance and sword may acquire him; and Richard Plantagenet is prouder of achieving an adventure, with only his good sword, and his good arm to speed, than if he led to battle an host of a hundred thousand armed men.'

'But your kingdom, my Liege,' said Ivanhoe — 'your kingdom is threatened with dissolution and civil war; your subjects menaced with every species of evil, if deprived of their sovereign in some of those dangers which it is your daily pleasure to incur, and from which you have but this moment narrowly escaped.'

'Ho! ho! my kingdom and my subjects!' answered Richard, impatiently; 'I tell thee, Sir Wilfred, the best of them are most willing to repay my follies in kind. For example, my very faithful servant, Wilfred of Ivanhoe, will not obey my positive commands, and yet reads his king a homily, because he does not walk exactly by his advice. Which of us has most reason to upbraid the other? Yet forgive me, my faithful Wilfred. The time I have spent, and am yet to spend, in concealment is, as I explained to thee at St. Botolph's, necessary to give my friends and faithful nobles time to assemble their forces, that, when Richard's return is announced, he should be at the head of such a force as enemies shall tremble to face, and thus subdue the meditated treason, without even unsheathing a sword. Estoteville and Bohun will not be strong enough to move forward to York for twenty-four hours. I must have news of Salisbury from the south, and of Beauchamp in Warwickshire, and of Multon and Percy in the north. The Chancellor must make sure of London. Too sudden an appearance would subject me to dangers other than my lance and sword, though backed by the bow of bold Robin, or the quarter-staff of Friar Tuck, and the horn of the sage Wamba, may be able to rescue me from.'

Wilfred bowed in submission, well knowing how vain it was to contend with the wild spirit of chivalry which so often impelled his master upon dangers which he might easily have avoided, or rather, which it was unpardonable in him to have sought out. The young knight sighed, therefore, and held his peace; while Richard, rejoiced at having silenced his counsellor, though his heart acknowledged the justice of the charge he had brought against him, went on in conversation with Robin Hood. 'King of outlaws,' he said, 'have you no refreshment to offer to your brother sovereign? for these dead knaves have found me both in exercise and appetite.'

'In troth,' replied the outlaw, 'for I scorn to lie to your Grace, our larder is chiefly supplied with ——' He stopped, and was somewhat embarrassed.

'With venison, I suppose?' said Richard, gaily: 'better food at need there can be none; and truly, if a king will not remain at home and slay his own game, methinks he should not brawl too loud if he finds it killed to his hand.'

'If your Grace, then,' said Robin, 'will again honour with your presence one of Robin Hood's places of rendezvous, the venison shall not be lacking; and a stoup of ale, and it may be a cup of reasonably good wine, to relish it withal.'

The outlaw accordingly led the way, followed by the buxom monarch, more happy, probably, in this chance meeting with Robin Hood and his foresters than he would have been in again assuming his royal state, and presiding over a splendid circle of peers and nobles. Novelty in society and adventure were the zest of life to Richard Cœur-de-Lion, and it had its highest relish when enhanced by dangers encountered and surmounted. In the lion-hearted king, the brilliant, but useless, character of a knight of romance was in a great measure realised and revived; and the personal glory which he acquired by his own deeds of arms was far more dear to his excited imagination than that which a course of policy and wisdom would have spread around his government. Accordingly, his reign was like the course of a brilliant and rapid meteor, which shoots along the face of heaven, shedding around an unnecessary and portentous light, which is instantly swallowed up by universal darkness; his feats of chivalry furnishing themes for bards and minstrels, but affording none of those solid benefits to his country on which history loves to pause, and hold up as an example to posterity. But in his present company Richard showed to the greatest imaginable advantage. He

was gay, good-humoured, and fond of manhood in every rank of life.

Beneath a huge oak-tree the silvan repast was hastily prepared for the King of England, surrounded by men outlaws to his government, but who now formed his court and his guard. As the flagon went round, the rough foresters soon lost their awe for the presence of Majesty. The song and the jest were exchanged, the stories of former deeds were told with advantage; and at length, and while boasting of their successful infraction of the laws, no one recollected they were speaking in presence of their natural guardian. The merry king, nothing heeding his dignity any more than his company, laughed, quaffed, and jested among the jolly band. The natural and rough sense of Robin Hood led him to be desirous that the scene should be closed ere anything should occur to disturb its harmony, the more especially that he observed Ivanhoe's brow clouded with anxiety. 'We are honoured,' he said to Ivanhoe, apart, 'by the presence of our gallant sovereign; yet I would not that he dallied with time which the circumstances of his kingdom may render precious.'

'It is well and wisely spoken, brave Robin Hood,' said Wilfred, apart; 'and know, moreover, that they who jest with Majesty, even in its gayest mood, are but toying with the lion's whelp, which, on slight provocation, uses both fangs and claws.'

'You have touched the very cause of my fear,' said the outlaw. 'My men are rough by practice and nature; the King is hasty as well as good-humoured; nor know I how soon cause of offence may arise, or how warmly it may be received; it is time this revel were broken off.'

'It must be by your management then, gallant yeoman,' said Ivanhoe; 'for each hint I have essayed to give him serves only to induce him to prolong it.'

'Must I so soon risk the pardon and favour of my sovereign?' said Robin Hood, pausing for an instant; 'but, by St. Christopher, it shall be so. I were undeserving his grace did I not peril it for his good. Here, Scathlock, get thee behind yonder thicket, and wind me a Norman blast on thy bugle, and without an instant's delay, on peril of your life.'

Scathlock obeyed his captain, and in less than five minutes the reveliers were startled by the sound of his horn.

'It is the bugle of Malvoisin,' said the Miller, starting to his feet, and seizing his bow. The Friar dropped the flagon, and

grasped his quarter-staff. Wamba stopt short in the midst of a jest, and betook himself to sword and target. All the others stood to their weapons.

Men of their precarious course of life change readily from the banquet to the battle; and to Richard the exchange seemed but a succession of pleasure. He called for his helmet and the most cumbrous parts of his armour, which he had laid aside; and while Gurth was putting them on, he laid his strict injunctions on Wilfred, under pain of his highest displeasure, not to engage in the skirmish which he supposed was approaching.

'Thou hast fought for me a hundred times, Wilfred, and I have seen it. Thou shalt this day look on, and see how Richard will fight for his friend and liegeman.'

In the meantime, Robin Hood had sent off several of his followers in different directions, as if to reconnoitre the enemy; and when he saw the company effectually broken up, he approached Richard, who was now completely armed, and, kneeling down on one knee, craved pardon of his sovereign.

'For what, good yeoman?' said Richard, somewhat impatiently. 'Have we not already granted thee a full pardon for all transgressions? Thinkest thou our word is a feather, to be blown backward and forward between us? Thou canst not have had time to commit any new offence since that time?'

'Ay, but I have though,' answered the yeoman, 'if it be an offence to deceive my prince for his own advantage. The bugle you have heard was none of Malvoisin's, but blown by my direction, to break off the banquet, lest it trenched upon hours of dearer import than to be thus dallied with.'

He then rose from his knee, folded his arms on his bosom, and, in a manner rather respectful than submissive, awaited the answer of the King, like one who is conscious he may have given offence, yet is confident in the rectitude of his motive. The blood rushed in anger to the countenance of Richard; but it was the first transient emotion, and his sense of justice instantly subdued it.

'The King of Sherwood,' he said, 'judges his venison and his wine-flask to the King of England! It is well, bold Robin! but when you come to see me in merry London, I trust to be a less niggard host. Thou art right, however, good fellow. Let us therefore to horse and away. Wilfred has been impatient this hour. Tell me, bold Robin, hast thou never a friend in thy band, who, not content with advising, will needs

direct thy motions, and look miserable when thou dost presume to act for thyself!

'Such a one,' said Robin, 'is my lieutenant, Little John, who is even now absent on an expedition as far as the borders of Scotland; and I will own to your Majesty that I am sometimes displeased by the freedom of his counsels; but, when I think twice, I cannot be long angry with one who can have no motive for his anxiety save zeal for his master's service.'

'Thou art right, good yeoman,' answered Richard; 'and if I had Ivanhoe, on the one hand, to give grave advice, and recommend it by the sad gravity of his brow, and thee, on the other, to trick me into what thou thinkest my own good, I should have as little the freedom of mine own will as any king in Christendom or Heathenesse. But come, sirs, let us merrily on to Coningsburgh, and think no more on't.'

Robin Hood assured them that he had detached a party in the direction of the road they were to pass, who would not fail to discover and apprise them of any secret ambuscade; and that he had little doubt they would find the ways secure, or, if otherwise, would receive such timely notice of the danger as would enable them to fall back on a strong troop of archers, with which he himself proposed to follow on the same route.

The wise and attentive precautions adopted for his safety touched Richard's feelings, and removed any slight grudge which he might retain on account of the deception the outlaw captain had practised upon him. He once more extended his hand to Robin Hood, assured him of his full pardon and future favour, as well as his firm resolution to restrain the tyrannical exercise of the forest rights and other oppressive laws, by which so many English yeomen were driven into a state of rebellion. But Richard's good intentions towards the bold outlaw were frustrated by the King's untimely death; and the Charter of the Forest was extorted from the unwilling hands of King John when he succeeded to his heroic brother. As for the rest of Robin Hood's career, as well as the tale of his treacherous death, they are to be found in those black-letter garlands, once sold at the low and easy rate of one halfpenny —

Now cheaply purchased at their weight in gold.

The outlaw's opinion proved true; and the King, attended by Ivanhoe, Gurth, and Wamba, arrived without any interruption within view of the Castle of Coningsburgh, while the sun was yet in the horizon.

There are few more beautiful or striking scenes in England than are presented by the vicinity of this ancient Saxon fortress. The soft and gentle river Don sweeps through an amphitheatre, in which cultivation is richly blended with woodland, and on a mount ascending from the river, well defended by walls and ditches, rises this ancient edifice, which, as its Saxon name implies, was, previous to the Conquest, a royal residence of the kings of England. The outer walls have probably been added by the Normans, but the inner keep bears token of very great antiquity. It is situated on a mount at one angle of the inner court, and forms a complete circle of perhaps twenty-five feet in diameter. The wall is of immense thickness, and is propped or defended by six huge external buttresses, which project from the circle, and rise up against the sides of the tower as if to strengthen or to support it. These massive buttresses are solid when they arise from the foundation, and a good way higher up; but are hollowed out towards the top, and terminate in a sort of turrets communicating with the interior of the keep itself. The distant appearance of this huge building, with these singular accompaniments, is as interesting to the lovers of the picturesque as the interior of the castle is to the eager antiquary, whose imagination it carries back to the days of the Heptarchy. A barrow, in the vicinity of the castle, is pointed out as the tomb of the memorable Hengist; and various monuments, of great antiquity and curiosity, are shown in the neighbouring churchyard.¹

When Cœur-de-Lion and his retinue approached this rude yet stately building, it was not, as at present, surrounded by external fortifications. The Saxon architect had exhausted his art in rendering the main keep defensible, and there was no other circumvallation than a rude barrier of palisades.

A huge black banner, which floated from the top of the tower, announced that the obsequies of the late owner were still in the act of being solemnised. It bore no emblem of the deceased's birth or quality, for armorial bearings were then a novelty among the Norman chivalry themselves, and were totally unknown to the Saxons. But above the gate was another banner, on which the figure of a white horse, rudely painted, indicated the nation and rank of the deceased, by the well-known symbol of Hengist and his Saxon warriors.

All around the castle was a scene of busy commotion; for such funeral banquets were times of general and profuse

¹ See Castle of Coningsburgh. Note 27.

hospitality, which not only every one who could claim the most distant connexion with the deceased, but all passengers whatsoever, were invited to partake. The wealth and consequence of the deceased Athelstane occasioned this custom to be observed in the fullest extent.

Numerous parties, therefore, were seen ascending and descending the hill on which the castle was situated ; and when the King and his attendants entered the open and unguarded gates of the external barrier, the space within presented a scene not easily reconciled with the cause of the assemblage. In one place cooks were toiling to roast huge oxen and fat sheep ; in another, hogsheads of ale were set abroad, to be drained at the freedom of all comers. Groups of every description were to be seen devouring the food and swallowing the liquor thus abandoned to their discretion. The naked Saxon serf was drowning the sense of his half-year's hunger and thirst in one day of gluttony and drunkenness ; the more pampered burgess and guild-brother was eating his morsel with gust, or curiously criticising the quantity of the malt and the skill of the brewer. Some few of the poorer Norman gentry might also be seen, distinguished by their shaven chins and short cloaks, and not less so by their keeping together, and looking with great scorn on the whole solemnity, even while condescending to avail themselves of the good cheer which was so liberally supplied.

Mendicants were, of course, assembled by the score, together with strolling soldiers returned from Palestine (according to their own account at least) ; pedlars were displaying their wares ; travelling mechanics were inquiring after employment ; and wandering palmers, hedge-priests, Saxon minstrels, and Welsh bards, were muttering prayers, and extracting mistuned dirges from their harps, crowds, and rotes.¹ One sent forth the praises of Athelstane in a doleful panegyric ; another, in a Saxon genealogical poem, rehearsed the uncouth and harsh names of his noble ancestry. Jesters and jugglers were not wanting, nor was the occasion of the assembly supposed to render the exercise of their profession indecorous or improper. Indeed, the ideas of the Saxons on these occasions were as natural as they were rude. If sorrow was thirsty, there was drink ; if hungry, there was food ; if it sunk down upon and saddened the heart, here were the means supplied of mirth, or

¹ The crowth, or crowd, was a species of violin. The rote a sort of guitar, or rather hurdy-gurdy, the strings of which were managed by a wheel, from which the instrument took its name.

at least of amusement. Nor did the assistants scorn to avail themselves of those means of consolation, although, every now and then, as if suddenly recollecting the cause which had brought them together, the men groaned in unison, while the females, of whom many were present, raised up their voices and shrieked for very woe.

Such was the scene in the castle-yard at Coningsburgh when it was entered by Richard and his followers. The senechal or steward deigned not to take notice of the groups of inferior guests who were perpetually entering and withdrawing, unless so far as was necessary to preserve order; nevertheless, he was struck by the good mien of the Monarch and Ivanhoe, more especially as he imagined the features of the latter were familiar to him. Besides, the approach of two knights, for such their dress bespoke them, was a rare event at a Saxon solemnity, and could not but be regarded as a sort of honour to the deceased and his family. And in his sable dress, and holding in his hand his white wand of office, this important personage made way through the miscellaneous assemblage of guests, thus conducting Richard and Ivanhoe to the entrance of the tower. Gurth and Wamba speedily found acquaintances in the courtyard, nor presumed to intrude themselves any farther until their presence should be required.

CHAPTER XLII

I found them winding of Marcello's corpse.
And there was such a solemn melody,
Twist doleful songs, tears, and sad elegies, —
Such as old grandames, watching by the dead,
Are wont to outwear the night with.

Old Play.

THE mode of entering the great tower of Coningsburgh Castle is very peculiar, and partakes of the rude simplicity of the early times in which it was erected. A flight of steps, so deep and narrow as to be almost precipitous, leads up to a low portal in the south side of the tower, by which the adventurous antiquary may still, or at least could a few years since, gain access to a small stair within the thickness of the main wall of the tower, which leads up to the third story of the building — the two lower being dungeons or vaults, which neither receive air nor light, save by a square hole in the third story, with which they seem to have communicated by a ladder. The access to the upper apartments in the tower, which consist in all of four stories, is given by stairs which are carried up through the external buttresses.

By this difficult and complicated entrance, the good King Richard, followed by his faithful Ivanhoe, was ushered into the round apartment which occupies the whole of the third story from the ground. Wilfred, by the difficulties of the ascent, gained time to muffle his face in his mantle, as it had been held expedient that he should not present himself to his father until the King should give him the signal.

There were assembled in this apartment, around a large oaken table, about a dozen of the most distinguished representatives of the Saxon families in the adjacent counties. These were all old, or at least elderly, men ; for the younger race, to the great displeasure of the seniors, had, like Ivanhoe, broken down many of the barriers which separated for half a century

the Norman victors from the vanquished Saxons. The downcast and sorrowful looks of these venerable men, their silence and their mournful posture, formed a strong contrast to the levity of the revellers on the outside of the castle. Their grey locks and long full beards, together with their antique tunics and loose black mantles, suited well with the singular and rude apartment in which they were seated, and gave the appearance of a band of ancient worshippers of Woden, recalled to life to mourn over the decay of their national glory.

Cedric, seated in equal rank among his countrymen, seemed yet, by common consent, to act as chief of the assembly. Upon the entrance of Richard (only known to him as the valorous Knight of the Petterlock) he arose gravely, and gave him welcome by the ordinary salutation, *Waes hael*, raising at the same time a goblet to his head. The King, no stranger to the customs of his English subjects, returned the greeting with the appropriate words, *Drinc hael*, and partook of a cup which was handed to him by the sewer. The same courtesy was offered to Ivanhoe, who pledged his father in silence, supplying the usual speech by an inclination of his head, lest his voice should have been recognised.

When this introductory ceremony was performed, Cedric arose, and, extending his hand to Richard, conducted him into a small and very rude chapel, which was excavated, as it were, out of one of the external buttresses. As there was no opening, saving a very narrow loophole, the place would have been nearly quite dark but for two flambeaux or torches, which showed, by a red and smoky light, the arched roof and naked walls, the rude altar of stone, and the crucifix of the same material.

Before this altar was placed a bier, and on each side of this bier knelt three priests, who told their beads, and muttered their prayers, with the greatest signs of external devotion. For this service a splendid 'soul-seat' was paid to the convent of St. Edmund's by the mother of the deceased; and, that it might be fully deserved, the whole brethren, saving the lame sacristan, had transferred themselves to Coningsburgh, where, while six of their number were constantly on guard in the performance of divine rites by the bier of Athelstane, the others failed not to take their share of the refreshments and amusements which went on at the castle. In maintaining this pious watch and ward, the good monks were particularly careful not to interrupt their hymns for an instant, lest Zerneck, the

ancient Saxon Apollyon, should lay his clutches on the departed Athelstane. Nor were they less careful to prevent any unhallowed layman from touching the pall, which, having been that used at the funeral of St. Edmund, was liable to be desecrated if handled by the profane. If, in truth, those attentions could be of any use to the deceased, he had some right to expect them at the hands of the brethren of St. Edmund's, since, besides a hundred mancuses of gold paid down as the soul-ransom, the mother of Athelstane had announced her intention of endowing that foundation with the better part of the lands of the deceased, in order to maintain perpetual prayers for his soul and that of her departed husband.

Richard and Wilfred followed the Saxon Cedric into the apartment of death, where, as their guide pointed with solemn air to the untimely bier of Athelstane, they followed his example in devoutly crossing themselves, and muttering a brief prayer for the weal of the departed soul.

This act of pious charity performed, Cedric again motioned them to follow him, gliding over the stone floor with a noiseless tread; and, after ascending a few steps, opened with great caution the door of a small oratory, which adjoined to the chapel. It was about eight feet square, hollowed, like the chapel itself, out of the thickness of the wall; and the loophole which enlightened it being to the west, and widening considerably as it sloped inward, a beam of the setting sun found its way into its dark recess, and showed a female of a dignified mien, and whose countenance retained the marked remains of majestic beauty. Her long mourning robes, and her flowing wimple of black cypress, enhanced the whiteness of her skin, and the beauty of her light-coloured and flowing tresses, which time had neither thinned nor mingled with silver. Her countenance expressed the deepest sorrow that is consistent with resignation. On the stone table before her stood a crucifix of ivory, beside which was laid a missal, having its pages richly illuminated, and its boards adorned with clasps of gold and bosses of the same precious metal.

'Noble Edith,' said Cedric, after having stood a moment silent, as if to give Richard and Wilfred time to look upon the lady of the mansion, 'these are worthy strangers come to take a part in thy sorrows. And this, in especial, is the valiant knight who fought so bravely for the deliverance of him for whom we this day mourn.'

'His bravery has my thanks,' returned the lady; 'although

it be the will of Heaven that it should be displayed in vain. I thank, too, his courtesy, and that of his companion, which hath brought them hither to behold the widow of Adeling, the mother of Athelstane, in her deep hour of sorrow and lamentation. To your care, kind kinsman, I entrust them, satisfied that they will want no hospitality which these sad walls can yet afford.'

The guests bowed deeply to the mourning parent, and withdrew with their hospitable guide.

Another winding stair conducted them to an apartment of the same size with that which they had first entered, occupying indeed the story immediately above. From this room, ere yet the door was opened, proceeded a low and melancholy strain of vocal music. When they entered, they found themselves in the presence of about twenty matrons and maidens of distinguished Saxon lineage. Four maidens, Rowena leading the choir, raised a hymn for the soul of the deceased, of which we have only been able to decipher two or three stanzas:—

Dust unto dust,
To this all must.
The tenant hath resign'd
The faded form
To waste and worm:
Corruption claims her kind.

Through paths unknown
Thy soul hath flown,
To seek the realms of woe,
Where fiery pain
Shall purge the stain
Of actions done below.

In that sad place,
By Mary's grace,
Brief may thy dwelling be!
Till prayers and alms,
And holy psalms,
Shall set the captive free.

While this dirge was sung, in a low and melancholy tone, by the female choristers, the others were divided into two bands, of which one was engaged in bedecking, with such embroidery as their skill and taste could compass, a large silken pall, destined to cover the bier of Athelstane, while the others busied themselves in selecting, from baskets of flowers placed before them, garlands, which they intended for the same mournful purpose. The behaviour of the maidens was decorous, if not marked with deep affliction; but now and then a whisper

or a smile called forth the rebuke of the severer matrons, and here and there might be seen a damsel more interested in endeavouring to find out how her mourning-robe became more than in the dismal ceremony for which they were preparing. Neither was this propriety (if we must needs confess the truth) at all diminished by the appearance of two strange knights, which occasioned some looking up, peeping, and whispering. Rowena alone, too proud to be vain, paid her greeting to her deliverer with a graceful courtesy. Her demeanour was serious, but not dejected; and it may be doubted whether thoughts of Ivanhoe, and of the uncertainty of his fate, did not claim as great a share in her gravity as the death of her kinsman.

To Cedric, however, who, as we have observed, was not remarkably clear-sighted on such occasions, the sorrow of his ward seemed so much deeper than any of the other maidens that he deemed it proper to whisper the explanation, 'She was the affianced bride of the noble Athelstane.' It may be doubted whether this communication went a far way to increase Wilfred's disposition to sympathise with the mourners of Coningsburgh.

Having thus formally introduced the guests to the different chambers in which the obsequies of Athelstane were celebrated under different forms, Cedric conducted them into a small room, destined, as he informed them, for the exclusive accommodation of honourable guests, whose more slight connexion with the deceased might render them unwilling to join those who were immediately affected by the unhappy event. He assured them of every accommodation, and was about to withdraw when the Black Knight took his hand.

'I crave to remind you, noble thane,' he said, 'that when we last parted you promised, for the service I had the fortune to render you, to grant me a boon.'

'It is granted ere named, noble Knight,' said Cedric; 'yet, at this sad moment —'

'Of that also,' said the King, 'I have bethought me; but my time is brief; neither does it seem to me unfit that, when closing the grave on the noble Athelstane, we should deposit therein certain prejudices and hasty opinions.'

'Sir Knight of the Fetterlock,' said Cedric, colouring, and interrupting the King in his turn, 'I trust your boon regards yourself and no other; for in that which concerns the honour of my house, it is scarce fitting that a stranger should mingle.'

'Nor do I wish to mingle,' said the King, mildly, 'unless in

so far as you will admit me to have an interest. As yet you have known me but as the Black Knight of the Fetterlock. Know me now as Richard Plantagenet.'

'Richard of Anjou!' exclaimed Cedric, stepping backward with the utmost astonishment.

'No, noble Cedric — Richard of England! whose deepest interest — whose deepest wish, is to see her sons united with each other. And, how now, worthy thane! hast thou no knee for thy prince?'

'To Norman blood,' said Cedric, 'it hath never bended.'

'Reserve thine homage then,' said the Monarch, 'until I shall prove my right to it by my equal protection of Normans and English.'

'Prince,' answered Cedric, 'I have ever done justice to thy bravery and thy worth. Nor am I ignorant of thy claim to the crown through thy descent from Matilda, niece to Edgar Atheling, and daughter to Malcolm of Scotland. But Matilda, though of the royal Saxon blood, was not the heir to the monarchy.'

'I will not dispute my title with thee, noble thane,' said Richard, calmly; 'but I will bid thee look around thee, and see where thou wilt find another to be put into the scale against it.'

'And hast thou wandered hither, Prince, to tell me so?' said Cedric — 'to upbraid me with the ruin of my race, ere the grave has closed o'er the last scion of Saxon royalty?' His countenance darkened as he spoke. 'It was boldly — it was rashly done!'

'Not so, by the holy rood!' replied the King; 'it was done in the frank confidence which one brave man may repose in another, without a shadow of danger.'

'Thou sayest well, Sir King — for King I own thou art, and wilt be, despite of my feeble opposition. I dare not take the only mode to prevent it, though thou hast placed the strong temptation within my reach!'

'And now to my boon,' said the King, 'which I ask not with one jot the less confidence, that thou hast refused to acknowledge my lawful sovereignty. I require of thee, as a man of thy word, on pain of being held faithless, man-sworn, and "nidering,"¹ to forgive and receive to thy paternal affection the good knight, Wilfred of Ivanhoe. In this reconciliation thou wilt own I have an interest — the happiness of my friend, and the quelling of dissension among my faithful people.'

¹ Infamous.

'And this is Wilfred!' said Cedric, pointing to his son.

'My father! — my father!' said Ivanhoe, prostrating himself at Cedric's feet, 'grant me thy forgiveness!'

'Thou hast it, my son,' said Cedric, raising him up. 'The son of Hereward knows how to keep his word, even when it has been passed to a Norman. But let me see thee use the dress and costume of thy English ancestry: no short cloaks, no gay bonnets, no fantastic plumage in my decent household. He that would be the son of Cedric must show himself of English ancestry. Thou art about to speak,' he added, sternly, 'and I guess the topic. The Lady Rowena must complete two years' mourning, as for a betrothed husband: all our Saxon ancestors would disown us were we to treat of a new union for her ere the grave of him she would have wedded — him so much the most worthy of her hand by birth and ancestry — is yet closed. The ghost of Athelstane himself would burst his bloody cerements, and stand before us to forbid such dishonour to his memory.'

It seemed as if Cedric's words had raised a spectre; for scarce had he uttered them ere the door flew open, and Athelstane, arrayed in the garments of the grave, stood before them, pale, haggard, and like something arisen from the dead!¹

The effect of this apparition on the persons present was utterly appalling. Cedric started back as far as the wall of the apartment would permit, and, leaning against it as one unable to support himself, gazed on the figure of his friend with eyes that seemed fixed, and a mouth which he appeared incapable of shutting. Ivanhoe crossed himself, repeating prayers in Saxon, Latin, or Norman-French, as they occurred to his memory, while Richard alternately said '*Benedicite*;' and swore, '*Mort de ma vie*!'

In the meantime, a horrible noise was heard below stairs, some crying, 'Secure the treacherous monks!' — others, 'Down with them into the dungeon!' — others, 'Pitch them from the highest battlements!'

'In the name of God!' said Cedric, addressing what seemed the spectre of his departed friend, 'if thou art mortal, speak! — if a departed spirit, say for what cause thou dost revisit us, or if I can do aught that can set thy spirit at repose. Living or dead, noble Athelstane, speak to Cedric!'

'I will,' said the spectre, very composedly, 'when I have

¹ See Raising of Athelstane. Note 28.

collected breath, and when you give me time. Alive, saidst thou? I am as much alive as he can be who has fed on bread and water for three days, which seem three ages. Yes, bread and water, father Cedric! By Heaven, and all saints in it, better food hath not passed my weasand for three livelong days, and by God's providence it is that I am now here to tell it.'

'Why, noble Athelstane,' said the Black Knight, 'I myself saw you struck down by the fierce Templar towards the end of the storm at Torquilstone, and, as I thought, and Wamba reported, your skull was cloven through the teeth.'

'You thought amiss, Sir Knight,' said Athelstane, 'and Wamba lied. My teeth are in good order, and that my supper shall presently find. No thanks to the Templar though, whose sword turned in his hand, so that the blade struck me flatlings, being averted by the handle of the good mace with which I warded the blow; had my steel-cap been on, I had not valued it a rush, and had dealt him such a counterbuff as would have spoilt his retreat. But as it was, down I went, stunned, indeed, but unwounded. Others, of both sides, were beaten down and slaughtered above me, so that I never recovered my senses until I found myself in a coffin — an open one, by good luck! — placed before the altar of the church of St. Edmund's. I sneezed repeatedly — groaned — awakened, and would have arisen, when the sacristan and abbot, full of terror, came running at the noise, surprised, doubtless, and no way pleased, to find the man alive whose heirs they had proposed themselves to be. I asked for wine; they gave me some, but it must have been highly medicated, for I slept yet more deeply than before, and wakened not for many hours. I found my arms swathed down, my feet tied so fast that mine ankles ache at the very remembrance; the place was utterly dark — the oubliette, as I suppose, of their accursed convent, and from the close, stifled, damp smell I conceive it is also used for a place of sepulture. I had strange thoughts of what had befallen me, when the door of my dungeon creaked, and two villain monks entered. They would have persuaded me I was in purgatory, but I knew too well the palsy, short-breathed voice of the father abbot. St. Jeremy! how different from that tone with which he used to ask me for another slice of the haunch! the dog has feasted with me from Christmas to Twelfth Night.'

'Have patience, noble Athelstane,' said the King, 'take breath — tell your story at leisure; beshrew me but such a tale is as well worth listening to as a romance.'

'Ay but, by the rood of Bromeholm, there was no romance in the matter!' said Athelstane. 'A barley loaf and a pitcher of water — that *they* gave me, the niggardly traitors, whom my father, and I myself, had enriched, when their best resources were the fitches of bacon and measures of corn out of which they wheedled poor serfs and bondsmen, in exchange for their prayers. The nest of foul, ungrateful vipers — barley bread and ditch water to such a patron as I had been! I will smoke them out of their nest though I be excommunicated!'

'But, in the name of Our Lady, noble Athelstane,' said Cedric, grasping the hand of his friend, 'how didst thou escape this imminent danger? did their hearts relent?'

'Did their hearts relent!' echoed Athelstane. 'Do rocks melt with the sun? I should have been there still, had not some stir in the convent, which I find was their procession hitherward to eat my funeral feast, when they well knew how and where I had been buried alive, summoned the swarm out of their hive. I heard them droning out their death-psalms, little judging they were sung in respect for my soul by those who were thus famishing my body. They went, however, and I waited long for food; no wonder — the gouty sacristan was even too busy with his own provender to mind mine. At length down he came, with an unstable step and a strong flavour of wine and spices about his person. Good cheer had opened his heart, for he left me a nook of pasty and a flask of wine instead of my former fare. I ate, drank, and was invigorated; when, to add to my good luck, the sacristan, too totty to discharge his duty of turnkey fitly, locked the door beside the staple, so that it fell ajar. The light, the food, the wine set my invention to work. The staple to which my chains were fixed was more rusted than I or the villain abbot had supposed. Even iron could not remain without consuming in the damps of that infernal dungeon.'

'Take breath, noble Athelstane,' said Richard, 'and partake of some refreshment, ere you proceed with a tale so dreadful.'

'Partake!' quoth Athelstane. 'I have been partaking five times to-day; and yet a morsel of that savoury ham were not altogether foreign to the matter: and I pray you, fair sir, to do me reason in a cup of wine.'

The guests, though still agape with astonishment, pledged their resuscitated landlord, who thus proceeded in his story: He had indeed now many more auditors than those to whom it was commenced, for Edith, having given certain necessary

orders for arranging matters within the castle, had followed the dead-alive up to the strangers' apartment, attended by as many of the guests, male and female, as could squeeze into the small room, while others, crowding the staircase, caught up an erroneous edition of the story, and transmitted it still more inaccurately to those beneath, who again sent it forth to the vulgar without, in a fashion totally irreconcilable to the real fact. Athelstane, however, went on as follows with the history of his escape : —

'Finding myself freed from the staple, I dragged myself upstairs as well as a man loaded with shackles, and emaciated with fasting, might ; and after much groping about, I was at length directed, by the sound of a jolly roundelay, to the apartment where the worthy sacristan, as it so please ye, was holding a devil's mass with a huge beetle-browed, broad-shouldered brother of the grey-frock and cowl, who looked much more like a thief than a clergyman. I burst in upon them, and the fashion of my grave-clothes, as well as the clanking of my chains, made me more resemble an inhabitant of the other world than of this. Both stood aghast ; but when I knocked down the sacristan with my fist, the other fellow, his pot-companion, fetched a blow at me with a huge quarter-staff.'

'This must be our Friar Tuck, for a count's ransom,' said Richard, looking at Ivanhoe.

'He may be the devil, an he will,' said Athelstane. 'Fortunately, he missed the aim ; and on my approaching to grapple with him, took to his heels and ran for it. I failed not to set my own heels at liberty by means of the fetter-key, which hung amongst others at the sexton's belt ; and I had thoughts of beating out the knave's brains with the bunch of keys, but gratitude for the nook of pasty and the flask of wine which the rascal had imparted to my captivity came over my heart ; so, with a brace of hearty kicks, I left him on the floor, pouched some baked meat and a leathern bottle of wine, with which the two venerable brethren had been regaling, went to the stable, and found in a private stall my own best palfrey, which, doubtless, had been set apart for the holy father abbot's particular use. Hither I came with all the speed the beast could compass — man and mother's son flying before me wherever I came, taking me for a spectre, the more especially as, to prevent my being recognised, I drew the corpse-hood over my face. I had not gained admittance into my own castle, had I not been supposed to be the attendant of a juggler who is making the

people in the castle-yard very merry, considering they are assembled to celebrate their lord's funeral. I say the sewer thought I was dressed to bear a part in the tregetour's mummery, and so I got admission, and did but disclose myself to my mother, and eat a hasty morsel, ere I came in quest of you, my noble friend.'

'And you have found me,' said Cedric, 'ready to resume our brave projects of honour and liberty. I tell thee, never will dawn a morrow so auspicious as the next for the deliverance of the noble Saxon race.'

'Talk not to me of delivering any one,' said Athelstane; 'it is well I am delivered myself. I am more intent on punishing that villain abbot. He shall hang on the top of this Castle of Coningsburgh, in his cope and stole; and if the stairs be too strait to admit his fat carcass, I will have him craned up from without.'

'But, my son,' said Edith, 'consider his sacred office.'

'Consider my three days' fast,' replied Athelstane; 'I will have their blood every one of them. Front-de-Bœuf was burnt alive for a less matter, for he kept a good table for his prisoners, only put too much garlic in his last dish of pottage. But these hypocritical, ungrateful slaves, so often the self-invited flatterers at my board, who gave me neither pottage nor garlic, more or less -- they die, by the soul of Hengist!'

'But the Pope, my noble friend,' said Cedric --

'But the devil, my noble friend,' answered Athelstane; 'they die, and no more of them. Were they the best monks upon earth, the world would go on without them.'

'For shame, noble Athelstane,' said Cedric; 'forget such wretches in the career of glory which lies open before thee. Tell this Norman prince, Richard of Anjou, that, lion-hearted as he is, he shall not hold undisputed the throne of Alfred, while a male descendant of the Holy Confessor lives to dispute it.'

'How!' said Athelstane, 'is this the noble King Richard?'

'It is Richard Plantagenet himself,' said Cedric; 'yet I need not remind thee that, coming hither a guest of free-will, he may neither be injured nor detained prisoner: thou well knowest thy duty to him as his host.'

'Ay, by my faith!' said Athelstane; 'and my duty as a subject besides, for I here tender him my allegiance, heart and hand.'

'My son,' said Edith, 'think on thy royal rights!'

'Think on the freedom of England, degenerate prince!' said Cedric.

'Mother and friend,' said Athelstane, 'a truce to your upbraidings! Bread and water and a dungeon are marvellous mortifiers of ambition, and I rise from the tomb a wiser man than I descended into it. One-half of those vain follies were puffed into my ear by that perfidious Abbot Wolfram, and you may now judge if he is a counsellor to be trusted. Since these plots were set in agitation, I have had nothing but hurried journeys, indigestions, blows and bruises, imprisonments, and starvation; besides that they can only end in the murder of some thousands of quiet folk. I tell you, I will be king in my own domains, and nowhere else; and my first act of dominion shall be to hang the abbot.'

'And my ward Rowena,' said Cedric — 'I trust you intend not to desert her?'

'Father Cedric,' said Athelstane, 'be reasonable. The Lady Rowena cares not for me; she loves the little finger of my kinsman Wilfred's glove better than my whole person. There she stands to avouch it. Nay, blush not, kinswoman; there is no shame in loving a courtly knight better than a country franklin; and do not laugh neither, Rowena, for grave-clothes and a thin visage are, God knows, no matter of merriment. Nay, an thou wilt needs laugh, I will find thee a better jest. Give me thy hand, or rather lend it me, for I but ask it in the way of friendship. Here, cousin Wilfred of Ivanhoe, in thy favour I renounce and abjure — Hey! by St. Dunstan, our cousin Wilfred hath vanished! Yet, unless my eyes are still dazzled with the fasting I have undergone, I saw him stand there but even now.'

All now looked around and inquired for Ivanhoe: but he had vanished. It was at length discovered that a Jew had been to seek him; and that, after very brief conference, he had called for Gurth and his armour, and had left the castle.

'Fair cousin,' said Athelstane to Rowena, 'could I think that this sudden disappearance of Ivanhoe was occasioned by other than the weightiest reason, I would myself resume —'

But he had no sooner let go her hand, on first observing that Ivanhoe had disappeared, than Rowena, who had found her situation extremely embarrassing, had taken the first opportunity to escape from the apartment.

'Certainly,' quoth Athelstane, 'women are the least to be trusted of all animals, monks and abbots excepted. I am an

infidel, if I expected not thanks from her, and perhaps a kiss to boot. These cursed grave-clothes have surely a spell on them, every one flies from me. To you I turn, noble King Richard, with the vows of allegiance, which, as a liege subject——

But King Richard was gone also, and no one knew whither. At length it was learned that he had hastened to the courtyard, summoned to his presence the Jew who had spoken with Ivanhoe, and, after a moment's speech with him, had called vehemently to horse, thrown himself upon a steed, compelled the Jew to mount another, and set off at a rate which, according to Wamba, rendered the old Jew's neck not worth a penny's purchase.

'By my halidome!' said Athelstane, 'it is certain that Zernebock hath possessed himself of my castle in my absence. I return in my grave-clothes, a pledge restored from the very sepulchre, and every one I speak to vanishes as soon as they hear my voice! But it skills not talking of it. Come, my friends, such of you as are left, follow me to the banquet-hall, lest any more of us disappear. It is, I trust, as yet tolerably furnished, as becomes the obsequies of an ancient Saxon noble; and should we tarry any longer, who knows but the devil may fly off with the supper!'

CHAPTER XLIII

Be Mowbray's sins so heavy in his bosom,
That they may break his foaming courser's back,
And throw the rider headlong in the lists,
A caitiff recreant !

Richard II.

OUR scene now returns to the exterior of the castle, or preceptory, of Templestowe, about the hour when the bloody die was to be cast for the life or death of Rebecca. It was a scene of bustle and life, as if the whole vicinity had poured forth its inhabitants to a village wake or rural feast. But the earnest desire to look on blood and death is not peculiar to those dark ages ; though, in the gladiatorial exercise of single combat and general tourney, they were habituated to the bloody spectacle of brave men falling by each other's hands. Even in our own days, when morals are better understood, an execution, a bruising-match, a riot, or a meeting of radical reformers, collects, at considerable hazard to themselves, immense crowds of spectators, otherwise little interested, except to see how matters are to be conducted, or whether the heroes of the day are, in the heroic language of insurgent tailors, 'flints' or 'dunghills.'

The eyes, therefore, of a very considerable multitude were bent on the gate of the preceptory of Templestowe, with the purpose of witnessing the procession ; while still greater numbers had already surrounded the tiltyard belonging to that establishment. This inclosure was formed on a piece of level ground adjoining to the preceptory, which had been levelled with care, for the exercise of military and chivalrous sports. It occupied the brow of a soft and gentle eminence, was carefully palisaded around, and, as the Templars willingly invited spectators to be witnesses of their skill in feats of chivalry, was amply supplied with galleries and benches for their use.

On the present occasion, a throne was erected for the Grand Master at the east end, surrounded with seats of distinction for

the preceptors and knights of the order. Over these floated the sacred standard, called *Le Beau-vent*, which was the ensign, as its name was the battle-cry, of the Templars.

At the opposite end of the lists was a pile of faggots, so arranged around a stake, deeply fixed in the ground, as to leave a space for the victim whom they were destined to consume to enter within the fatal circle, in order to be chained to the stake by the fetters which hung ready for the purpose. Beside this deadly apparatus stood four black slaves, whose colour and African features, then so little known in England, appalled the multitude, who gazed on them as on demons employed about their own diabolical exercises. These men stirred not excepting now and then, under the direction of one who seemed their chief, to shift and replace the ready fuel. They looked not on the multitude. In fact, they seemed insensible of their presence, and of everything save the discharge of their horrible duty. And when, in speech with each other, they expanded their blubber lips, and showed their white fangs, as if they grinned at the thoughts of the expected tragedy, the startled commons could scarcely help believing that they were actually the familiar spirits with whom the witch had communed, and who, her time being out, stood ready to assist in her dreadful punishment. They whispered to each other, and communicated all the feats which Satan had performed during that busy and unhappy period, not failing, of course, to give the devil rather more than his due.

'Have you not heard, father Denet,' quoth one boor to another advanced in years, 'that the devil has carried away bodily the great Saxon thane, Athelstane of Coningsburgh?'

'Ay, but he brought him back though, by the blessing of God and St. Dunstan.'

'How's that?' said a brisk young fellow, dressed in a green cassock embroidered with gold, and having at his heels a stout lad bearing a harp upon his back, which betrayed his vocation. The Minstrel seemed of no vulgar rank; for, besides the splendour of his gaily broideder doublet, he wore around his neck a silver chain, by which hung the 'wrest,' or key, with which he tuned his harp. On his right arm was a silver plate, which, instead of bearing, as usual, the cognizance or badge of the baron to whose family he belonged, had barely the word *SHERWOOD* engraved upon it. 'How mean you by that?' said the gay Minstrel, mingling in the conversation of the peasants; 'I came to seek one subject for my rhyme, and, by'r Lady, I were glad to find two.'

'It is well avouched,' said the elder peasant, 'that after Athelstane of Coningsburgh had been dead four weeks——'

'That is impossible,' said the Minstrel; 'I saw him in life at the passage of arms at Ashby-de-la-Zouche.'

'Dead, however, he was, or else translated,' said the younger peasant; 'for I heard the monks of St. Edmund's singing the death's hymn for him; and, moreover, there was a rich death-meal and dole at the Castle of Coningsburgh, as right was; and thither had I gone, but for Mabel Parkins, who——'

'Ay, dead was Athelstane,' said the old man, shaking his head, 'and the more pity it was, for the old Saxon blood——'

'But, your story, my masters — your story,' said the Minstrel, somewhat impatiently.

'Ay, ay — construe us the story,' said a burly friar, who stood beside them, leaning on a pole that exhibited an appearance between a pilgrim's staff and a quarter-staff, and probably acted as either when occasion served — 'your story,' said the stalwart churchman. 'Burn not daylight about it; we have short time to spare.'

'An please your reverence,' said Dennet, 'a drunken priest came to visit the sacristan at St. Edmund's——'

'It does not please my reverence,' answered the churchman, 'that there should be such an animal as a drunken priest, or, if there were, that a layman should so speak to him. Be mannerly, my friend, and conclude the holy man only wrapt in meditation, which makes the head dizzy and foot unsteady, as if the stomach were filled with new wine: I have felt it myself.'

'Well, then,' answered father Dennet, 'a holy brother came to visit the sacristan at St. Edmund's — a sort of hedge-priest is the visitor, and kills half the deer that are stolen in the forest, who loves the tinkling of a pint-pot better than the sacring-bell, and deems a fitch of bacon worth ten of his breviary; for the rest, a good fellow and a merry, who will flourish a quarter-staff, draw a bow, and dance a Cheshire round with e'er a man in Yorkshire.'

'That last part of thy speech, Dennet,' said the Minstrel, 'has saved thee a rib or twain.'

'Tush, man, I fear him not,' said Dennet; 'I am somewhat old and stiff, but when I fought for the bell and ram at Doncaster——'

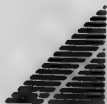
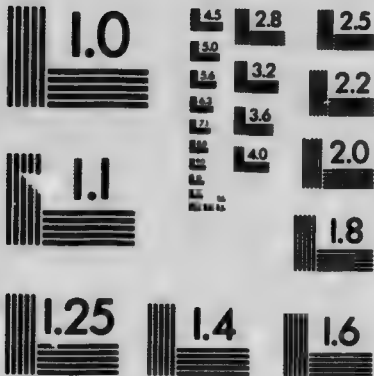
'But the story — the story, my friend,' again said the Minstrel.

'Why, the tale is but this — Athelstane of Coningsburgh was buried at St. Edmund's.'



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'That 's a lie, and a loud one,' said the friar, 'for I saw him borne to his own Castle of Coningsburgh.'

'Nay, then, e'en tell the story yourself, my masters,' said Dennet, turning sulky at these repeated contradictions; and it was with some difficulty that the boor could be prevailed on, by the request of his comrade and the Minstrel, to renew his tale. 'These two *sober* friars,' said he at length, 'since this reverend man will needs have them such, had continued drinking good ale, and wine, and what not, for the best part of a summer's day, when they were aroused by a deep groan, and a clanking of chains, and the figure of the deceased Athelstane entered the apartment, saying, "Ye evil shepherds——!"'

'It is false,' said the friar, hastily, 'he never spoke a word.'

'So ho! Friar Tuck,' said the Minstrel, drawing him apart from the rustics; 'we have started a new hare, I find.'

'I tell thee, Allan-a-Dale,' said the hermit, 'I saw Athelstane of Coningsburgh as much as bodily eyes ever saw a living man. He had his shroud on, and all about him smelt of the sepulchre. A butt of sack will not wash it out of my memory.'

'Pshaw!' answered the Minstrel; 'thou dost but jest with me!'

'Never believe me,' said the Friar, 'an I fetched not a knock at him with my quarter-staff that would have felled an ox, and it glided through his body as it might through a pillar of smoke!'

'By St. Hubert,' said the Minstrel, 'but it is a wondrous tale, and fit to be put in metre to the ancient tune, "Sorrow came to the Old Friar."'

'Laugh, if ye list,' said Friar Tuck; 'but an ye catch me singing on such a theme, may the next ghost or devil carry me off with him headlong! No, no — I instantly formed the purpose of assisting at some good work, such as the burning of a witch, a judicial combat, or the like matter of godly service, and therefore am I here.'

As they thus conversed, the heavy bell of the church of St. Michael of Templestowe, a venerable building, situated in a hamlet at some distance from the preceptory, broke short their argument. One by one the sullen sounds fell successively on the ear, leaving but sufficient space for each to die away in distant echo, ere the air was again filled by repetition of the iron knell. These sounds, the signal of the approaching ceremony, chilled with awe the hearts of the assembled multitude, whose

eyes were now turned to the preceptory, expecting the approach of the Grand Master, the champion, and the criminal.

At length the drawbridge fell, the gates opened, and a knight, bearing the great standard of the order, sallied from the castle, preceded by six trumpets, and followed by the knights preceptors, two and two, the Grand Master coming last, mounted on a stately horse, whose furniture was of the simplest kind. Behind him came Brian de Bois-Guilbert, armed cap-à-pie in bright armour, but without his lance, shield, and sword, which were borne by his two esquires behind him. His face, though partly hidden by a long plume which floated down from his barret-cap, bore a strong and mingled expression of passion, in which pride seemed to contend with irresolution. He looked ghastly pale, as if he had not slept for several nights, yet reined his pawing war-horse with the habitual ease and grace proper to the best lance of the order of the Temple. His general appearance was grand and commanding; but, looking at him with attention, men read that in his dark features from which they willingly withdrew their eyes.

On either side rode Conrade of Mont-Fitchet and Albert de Malvoisin, who acted as godfathers to the champion. They were in their robes of peace, the white dress of the order. Behind them followed other companions of the Temple, with a long train of esquires and pages clad in black, aspirants to the honour of being one day knights of the order. After these neophytes came a guard of warders on foot, in the same sable livery, amidst whose partizans might be seen the pale form of the accused, moving with a slow but undismayed step towards the scene of her fate. She was stript of all her ornaments, lest perchance there should be among them some of those amulets which Satan was supposed to bestow upon his victims, to deprive them of the power of confession even when under the torture. A coarse white dress, of the simplest form, had been substituted for her Oriental garments; yet there was such an exquisite mixture of courage and resignation in her look that even in this garb, and with no other ornament than her long black tresses, each eye wept that looked upon her, and the most hardened bigot regretted the fate that had converted a creature so goodly into a vessel of wrath, and a waged slave of the devil.

A crowd of inferior personages belonging to the preceptory followed the victim, all moving with the utmost order, with arms folded and looks bent upon the ground.

This slow procession moved up the gentle eminence, on the summit of which was the tiltyard, and, entering the lists, marched once around them from right to left, and when they had completed the circle, made a halt. There was then a momentary bustle, while the Grand Master and all his attendants, excepting the champion and his godfathers, dismounted from their horses, which were immediately removed out of the lists by the esquires, who were in attendance for that purpose.

The unfortunate Rebecca was conducted to the black chair placed near the pile. On her first glance at the terrible spot where preparations were making for a death alike dismaying to the mind and painful to the body, she was observed to shudder and shut her eyes, praying internally, doubtless, for her lips moved, though no speech was heard. In the space of a minute she opened her eyes, looked fixedly on the pile as if to familiarise her mind with the object, and then slowly and naturally turned away her head.

Meanwhile, the Grand Master had assumed his seat; and when the chivalry of his order was placed around and behind him, each in his due rank, a loud and long flourish of the trumpets announced that the court were seated for judgment. Malvoisin then, acting as godfather of the champion, stepped forward, and laid the glove of the Jewess, which was the pledge of battle, at the feet of the Grand Master.

'Venerable lord and reverend father,' said he, 'here standeth the good knight, Brian de Bois-Guilbert, Knight Preceptor of the Order of the Temple, who, by accepting the pledge of battle which I now lay at your reverence's feet, hath become bound to do his devoir in combat this day, to maintain that this Jewish maiden, by name Rebecca, hath justly deserved the doom passed upon her in a chapter of this most holy order of the Temple of Zion, condemning her to die as a sorceress — here, I say, he standeth, such battle to do, knightly and honourable, if such be your noble and sanctified pleasure.'

'Hath he made oath,' said the Grand Master, 'that his quarrel is just and honourable? Bring forward the crucifix and the *Te igitur*.'

'Sir and most reverend father,' answered Malvoisin, readily, 'our brother here present hath already sworn to the truth of his accusation in the hand of the good knight Conrad de Mont-Fitchet; and otherwise he ought not to be sworn, seeing that his adversary is an unbeliever, and may take no oath.'

This explanation was satisfactory, to Albert's great joy: for

the wily knight had foreseen the great difficulty, or rather impossibility, of prevailing upon Brian de Bois-Guilbert to take such an oath before the assembly, and had invented this excuse to escape the necessity of his doing so.

The Grand Master, having allowed the apology of Albert Malvoisin, commanded the herald to stand forth and do his devoir. The trumpets then again flourished, and a herald, stepping forward, proclaimed aloud, 'Oyez, oyez, oyez. Here standeth the good knight, Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, ready to do battle with any knight of free blood who will sustain the quarrel allowed and allotted to the Jewess Rebecca, to try by champion, in respect of lawful essoine of her own body; and to such champion the reverend and valorous Grand Master here present allows a fair field, and equal partition of sun and wind, and whatever else appertains to a fair combat.' The trumpets again sounded, and there was a dead pause of many minutes.

'No champion appears for the appellant,' said the Grand Master. 'Go, herald, and ask her whether she expects any one to do battle for her in this her cause.'

The herald went to the chair in which Rebecca was seated; and Bois-Guilbert, suddenly turning his horse's head toward that end of the lists, in spite of hints on either side from Malvoisin and Mont-Fitchet, was by the side of Rebecca's chair as soon as the herald.

'Is this regular, and according to the law of combat?' said Malvoisin, looking to the Grand Master.

'Albert de Malvoisin, it is,' answered Beaumanoir; 'for in this appeal to the judgment of God we may not prohibit parties from having that communication with each other which may best tend to bring forth the truth of the quarrel.'

In the meantime, the herald spoke to Rebecca in these terms: 'Doomed, the honourable and reverend the Grand Master demands of thee, if thou art prepared with a champion to do battle this day in thy behalf, or if thou dost yield thee as one justly condemned to a deserved doom?'

'Say to the Grand Master,' replied Rebecca, 'that I maintain my innocence, and do not yield me as justly condemned, lest I become guilty of mine own blood. Say to him, that I challenge such delay as his forms will permit, to see if God, whose opportunity is in man's extremity, will raise me up a deliverer; and when such uttermost space is passed, may His holy will be done!'

The herald retired to carry this answer to the Grand Master.

'God forbid,' said Lucas Beaumanoir, 'that Jew or Pagan should impeach us of injustice ! Until the shadows be cast from the west to the eastward, will we wait to see if a champion shall appear for this unfortunate woman. When the day is so far passed, let her prepare for death.'

The herald communicated the words of the Grand Master to Rebecca, who bowed her head submissively, folded her arms, and, looking up towards heaven, seemed to expect that aid from above which she could scarce promise herself from man. During this awful pause, the voice of Bois-Guilbert broke upon her ear ; it was but a whisper, yet it startled her more than the summons of the herald had appeared to do.

'Rebecca,' said the Templar, 'dost thou hear me ?'

'I have no portion in thee, cruel, hard-hearted man,' said the unfortunate maiden.

'Ay, but dost thou understand my words ?' said the Templar ; 'for the sound of my voice is frightful in mine own ears. I scarce know on what ground we stand, or for what purpose they have brought us hither. This listed space — that chair — these faggots — I know their purpose, and yet it appears to me like something unreal — the fearful picture of a vision, which appals my sense with hideous fantasies, but convinces not my reason.'

'My mind and senses keep touch and time,' answered Rebecca, 'and tell me alike that these faggots are destined to consume my earthly body, and open a painful but a brief passage to a better world.'

'Dreams, Rebecca — dreams,' answered the Templar — 'idle visions, rejected by the wisdom of your own wiser Sadducees. Hear me, Rebecca,' he said, proceeding with animation ; 'a better chance hast thou for life and liberty than yonder knaves and dotard dream of. Mount thee behind me on my steed — on Zamor, the gallant horse that never failed his rider. I won him in single fight from the Soldan of Trebizond. Mount, I say, behind me ; in one short hour is pursuit and inquiry far behind — a new world of pleasure opens to thee — to me a new career of fame. Let them speak the doom which I despise, and erase the name of Bois-Guilbert from their list of monastic slaves ! I will wash out with blood whatever blot they may dare to cast on my scutcheon.'

'Tempter,' said Rebecca, 'begone ! Not in this last extremity canst thou move me one hair's-breadth from my resting-place. Surrounded as I am by foes, I hold thee as my worst and most deadly enemy ; avoid thee, in the name of God !'

Albert Malvoisin, alarmed and impatient at the duration of their conference, now advanced to interrupt it.

'Hath the maiden acknowledged her guilt?' he demanded of Bois-Guilbert; 'or is she resolute in her denial?'

'She is indeed *resolute*,' said Bois-Guilbert.

'Then,' said Malvoisin, 'must thou, noble brother, resume thy place to attend the issue. The shades are changing on the circle of the dial. Come, brave Bois-Guilbert — come, thou hope of our holy order, and soon to be its head.'

As he spoke in this soothing tone, he laid his hand on the knight's bridle, as if to lead him back to his station.

'False villain! what meanest thou by thy hand on my rein?' said Sir Brian, angrily. And shaking off his companion's grasp, he rode back to the upper end of the lists.

'There is yet spirit in him,' said Malvoisin apart to Mont-Fitchet, 'were it well directed; but, like the Greek fire, it burns whatever approaches it.'

The judges had now been two hours in the lists, awaiting in vain the appearance of a champion.

'And reason good,' said Friar Tuck, 'seeing she is a Jewess; and yet, by mine order, it is hard that so young and beautiful a creature should perish without one blow being struck in her behalf! Were she ten times a witch, provided she were but the least bit of a Christian, my quarter-staff should ring noon on the steel cap of yonder fierce Templar, ere he carried the matter off thus.'

It was, however, the general belief that no one could or would appear for a Jewess accused of sorcery; and the knights, instigated by Malvoisin, whispered to each other that it was time to declare the pledge of Rebecca forfeited. At this instant a knight, urging his horse to speed, appeared on the plain advancing towards the lists. A hundred voices exclaimed, 'A champion! — a champion!' And, despite the prepossessions and prejudices of the multitude, they shouted unanimously as the knight rode into the tiltyard. The second glance, however, served to destroy the hope that his timely arrival had excited. His horse, urged for many miles to its utmost speed, appeared to reel from fatigue, and the rider, however undauntedly he presented himself in the lists, either from weakness, weariness, or both, seemed scarce able to support himself in the saddle.

To the summons of the herald, who demanded his rank, his name, and purpose, the stranger knight answered readily and boldly, 'I am a good knight and noble, come hither to sustain

th lance and sword the just and lawful quarrel of this damsel, Rebecca, daughter of Isaac of York ; to uphold the doom pronounced against her to be false and truthless, and to defy Sir Brian de Bois-Guilbert, as a traitor, murderer, and liar ; as I will prove in this field with my body against his, by the aid of God, of Our Lady, and of Monseigneur St. George, the good knight.'

'The stranger must first show,' said Malvoisin, 'that he is good knight, and of honourable lineage. The Temple sendeth not forth her champions against nameless men.'

'My name,' said the knight, raising his helmet, 'is better known, my lineage more pure, Malvoisin, than thine own. I am Wilfred of Ivanhoe.'

'I will not fight with thee at present,' said the Templar, in a changed and hollow voice. 'Get thy wounds healed, purvey thee a better horse, and it may be I will hold it worth my while to scourge out of thee this boyish spirit of bravade.'

'Ha! proud Templar,' said Ivanhoe, 'hast thou forgotten that twice didst thou fall before this lance? Remember the lists at Acre; remember the passage of arms at Ashby; remember thy proud vaunt in the halls of Rotherwood, and the gage of your gold chain against my reliquary, that thou wouldst do battle with Wilfred of Ivanhoe, and recover the honour thou hadst lost! By that reliquary, and the holy relic it contains, I will proclaim thee, Templar, a coward in every court in Europe — in every preceptory of thine order — unless thou do battle without farther delay.'

Bois-Guilbert turned his countenance irresolutely towards Rebecca, and then exclaimed, looking fiercely at Ivanhoe. 'Dog of a Saxon! take thy lance, and prepare for the death thou hast drawn upon thee!'

'Does the Grand Master allow me the combat?' said

'I may not deny what thou hast challenged,' said the Master, 'provided the maiden accepts thee as her champion. Yet I would thou wert in better plight to do battle. No knight of our order hast thou ever been, yet would I have thee honourably met with.'

'Thus — thus I am, and not otherwise,' said Ivanhoe: 'it is the judgment of God — to His keeping I commend myself. Rebecca,' said he, riding up to the fatal chair, 'dost thou accept of me for thy champion?'

'I do,' she said — 'I do,' fluttered by an emotion which the fear of death had been unable to produce — 'I do accept thee as

the champion whom Heaven hath sent me. Yet, no — no — thy wounds are uncured. Meet not that proud man ; why shouldst thou perish also ?

But Ivanhoe was already at his post, and had closed his visor, and assumed his lance. Bois-Guilbert did the same ; and his esquire remarked, as he clasped his visor, that his face, which had, notwithstanding the variety of emotions by which he had been agitated, continued during the whole morning of an ashy paleness, was now become suddenly very much flushed.

The herald then, seeing each champion in his place, uplifted his voice, repeating thrice — *Faites vos devoirs, preux chevaliers !* After the third cry, he withdrew to one side of the lists, and again proclaimed that none, on peril of instant death, should dare by word, cry, or action to interfere with or disturb this fair field of combat. The Grand Master, who held in his hand the gage of battle, Rebecca's glove, now threw it into the lists, and pronounced the fatal signal words, *Laissez aller.*

The trumpets sounded, and the knights charged each other in full career. The wearied horse of Ivanhoe, and its no less exhausted rider, went down, as all had expected, before the well-aimed lance and vigorous steed of the Templar. This issue of the combat all had foreseen ; but although the spear of Ivanhoe did but, in comparison, touch the shield of Bois-Guilbert, that champion, to the astonishment of all who beheld it, reeled in his saddle, lost his stirrups, and fell in the lists.

Ivanhoe, extricating himself from his fallen horse, was soon on foot, hastening to mend his fortune with his sword ; but his antagonist arose not. Wilfred, placing his foot on his breast, and the sword's point to his throat, commanded him to yield him, or die on the spot. Bois-Guilbert returned no answer.

'Slay him not, Sir Knight,' cried the Grand Master, 'unshriven and unabsolved ; kill not body and soul ! We allow him vanquished.'

He descended into the lists, and commanded them to unhelm the conquered champion. His eyes were closed ; the dark red flush was still on his brow. As they looked on him in astonishment, the eyes opened ; but they were fixed and glazed. The flush passed from his brow, and gave way to the pallid hue of death. Unscathed by the lance of his enemy, he had died a victim to the violence of his own contending passions.

'This is indeed the judgment of God,' said the Grand Master, looking upwards — '*Fiat voluntas tua !*'

CHAPTER XLIV

So! now 't is ended, like an old wife's story.

WEBSTER.

WHEN the first moments of surprise were over, Wilfred of Ivanhoe demanded of the Grand Master, as judge of the field, if he had manfully and rightfully done his duty in the combat.

'Manfully and rightfully hath it been done,' said the Grand Master; 'I pronounce the maiden free and guiltless. The arms and the body of the deceased knight are at the will of the victor.'

'I will not despoil him of his weapons,' said the Knight of Ivanhoe, 'nor condemn his corpse to shame: he hath fought for Christendom. God's arm, no human hand, hath this day struck him down. But let his obsequies be private, as becomes those of a man who died in an unjust quarrel. And for the maiden——'

He was interrupted by a clattering of horses' feet, advancing in such numbers, and so rapidly, as to shake the ground before them; and the Black Knight galloped into the lists. He was followed by a numerous band of men-at-arms, and several knights in complete armour.

'I am too late,' he said, looking around him. 'I had doomed Bois-Guilbert for mine own property. Ivanhoe, was this well, to take on thee such a venture, and thou scarce able to keep thy saddle?'

'Heaven, my Liege,' answered Ivanhoe, 'hath taken this proud man for its victim. He was not to be honoured in dying as your will had designed.'

'Peace be with him,' said Richard, looking steadfastly on the corpse, 'if it may be so; he was a gallant knight, and has died in his steel harness full knightly. But we must waste no time. Bohun, do thine office!'

A knight stepped forward from the King's attendants, and,



THE DEATH OF BOIS-GUILBERT.

laying his hand on the shoulder of Albert de Malvoisin, said, 'I arrest thee of high treason.'

The Grand Master had hitherto stood astonished at the appearance of so many warriors. He now spoke.

'Who dares to arrest a knight of the Temple of Zion, within the girth of his own preceptory, and in the presence of the Grand Master? and by whose authority is this bold outrage offered?'

'I make the arrest,' replied the knight — 'I, Henry Bohun, Earl of Essex, Lord High Constable of England.'

'And he arrests Malvoisin,' said the King, raising his visor, 'by the order of Richard Plantagenet, here present. Conrad Mont-Fitchet, it is well for thee thou art born no subject of mine. But for thee, Malvoisin, thou diest with thy brother Philip ere the world be a week older.'

'I will resist thy doom,' said the Grand Master.

'Proud Templar,' said the King, 'thou canst not: look up, and behold the royal standard of England floats over thy towers instead of thy Temple banner! Be wise, Beaumanoir, and make no bootless opposition. Thy hand is in the lion's mouth.'

'I will appeal to Rome against thee,' said the Grand Master, 'for usurpation on the immunities and privileges of our order.'

'Be it so,' said the King; 'but for thine own sake tax me not with usurpation now. Dissolve thy chapter, and depart with thy followers to thy next preceptory, if thou canst find one which has not been made the scene of treasonable conspiracy against the King of England. Or, if thou wilt, remain, to share our hospitality, and behold our justice.'

'To be a guest in the house where I should command?' said the Templar; 'never! Chaplain, raise the Psalm, *Quare fremuerunt gentes?* Knights, squires, and followers of the Holy Temple, prepare to follow the banner of *Beau-sant*!'

The Grand Master spoke with a dignity which confronted even that of England's king himself, and inspired courage into his surprised and dismayed followers. They gathered around him like the sheep around the watch-dog, when they hear the baying of the wolf. But they evinced not the timidity of the scared flock: there were dark brows of defiance, and looks which menaced the hostility they dared not to proffer in words. They drew together in a dark line of spears, from which the white cloaks of the knights were visible among the dusky garments of their retainers, like the lighter-coloured

edges of a sable cloud. The multitude, who had raised a clamorous shout of reprobation, paused and gazed in silence on the formidable and experienced body to which they had unwarily bade defiance, and shrunk back from their front.

The Earl of Essex, when he beheld them pause in their assembled force, dashed the rowels into his charger's sides, and galloped backwards and forwards to array his followers, in opposition to a band so formidable. Richard alone, as if he loved the danger his presence had provoked, rode slowly along the front of the Templars, calling aloud, 'What, sirs! Among so many gallant knights, will none dare splinter a spear with Richard? Sirs of the Temple! your ladies are but sun-burned, if they are not worth the shiver of a broken lance!'

'The brethren of the Temple,' said the Grand Master, riding forward in advance of their body, 'fight not on such idle and profane quarrel; and not with thee, Richard of England, shall a Templar cross lance in my presence. The Pope and princes of Europe shall judge our quarrel, and whether a Christian prince has done well in bucklering the cause which thou hast to-day adopted. If unassailed, we depart assailing no one. To thine honour we refer the armour and household goods of the order which we leave behind us, and on thy conscience we lay the scandal and offence thou hast this day given to Christendom.'

With these words, and without waiting a reply, the Grand Master gave the signal of departure. Their trumpets sounded a wild march, of an Oriental character, which formed the usual signal for the Templars to advance. They changed their array from a line to a column of march, and moved off as slowly as their horses could step, as if to show it was only the will of their Grand Master, and no fear of the opposing and superior force, which compelled them to withdraw.

'By the splendour of Our Lady's brow!' said King Richard, 'it is pity of their lives that these Templars are not so trusty as they are disciplined and valiant.'

The multitude, like a timid cur which waits to bark till the object of its challenge has turned his back, raised a feeble shout as the rear of the squadron left the ground.

During the tumult which attended the retreat of the Templars, Rebecca saw and heard nothing: she was locked in the arms of her aged father, giddy, and almost senseless, with the rapid change of circumstances around her. But one word from Isaac at length recalled her scattered feelings.

'Let us go,' he said, 'my dear daughter, my recovered treasure—let us go to throw ourselves at the feet of the good youth.'

'Not so,' said Rebecca. 'O no—no—no; I must not at this moment dare to speak to him. Alas! I should say more than—— No, my father, let us instantly leave this evil place.'

'But, my daughter,' said Isaac, 'to leave him who hath come forth like a strong man with his spear and shield, holding his life as nothing, so he might redeem thy captivity; and thou, too, the daughter of a people strange unto him and his—this is service to be thankfully acknowledged.'

'It is—it is—most thankfully—most devoutly acknowledged,' said Rebecca; 'it shall be still more so—but not now—for the sake of thy beloved Rachael, father, grant my request—not now!'

'Nay, but,' said Isaac, insisting, 'they will deem us more thankless than mere dogs!'

'But thou seest, my dear father, that King Richard is in presence, and that——'

'True, my best—my wisest Rebecca. Let us hence—let us hence! Money he will lack, for he has just returned from Palestine, and, as they say, from prison; and pretext for exacting it, should he need any, may arise out of my simple traffic with his brother John. Away—away, let us hence!'

And hurrying his daughter in his turn, he conducted her from the lists, and by means of conveyance which he had provided, transported her safely to the house of the Rabbi Nathan.

The Jewess, whose fortunes had formed the principal interest of the day, having now retired unobserved, the attention of the populace was transferred to the Black Knight. They now filled the air with 'Long life to Richard with the Lion's Heart, and down with the usurping Templars!'

'Notwithstanding all this lip-loyalty,' said Ivanhoe to the Earl of Essex, 'it was well the King took the precaution to bring thee with him, noble Earl, and so many of thy trusty followers.'

The Earl smiled and shook his head.

'Gallant Ivanhoe,' said Essex, 'dost thou know our master so well, and yet suspect him of taking so wise a precaution! I was drawing towards York, having heard that Prince John was making head there, when I met King Richard, like a true knight-errant, galloping hither to achieve in his own person

this adventure of the Templar and the Jewess, with his own single arm. I accompanied him with my hand, almost maugre his consent.'

'And what news from York, brave Earl?' said Ivanhoe. 'will the rebels bide us there?'

'No more than December's snow will bide July's sun,' said the Earl; 'they are dispersing; and who should come posting to bring us the news, but John himself!'

'The traitor! — the ungrateful, insolent traitor!' said Ivanhoe; 'did not Richard order him into confinement?'

'O! he received him,' answered the Earl, 'as if they had met after a hunting party; and, pointing to me and our men-at-arms, said, "Thou seest, brother, I have some angry men with me; thou wert best go to our mother, carry her my duteous affection, and abide with her until men's minds are pacified."'

'And this was all he said?' inquired Ivanhoe; 'would not any one say that this prince invites men to treason by his clemency?'

'Just,' replied the Earl, 'as the man may be said to invite death who undertakes to fight a combat, having a dangerous wound unhealed.'

'I forgive thee the jest, Lord Earl,' said Ivanhoe; 'but, remember, I hazarded but my own life — Richard, the welfare of his kingdom.'

'Those,' replied Essex, 'who are specially careless of their own welfare are seldom remarkably attentive to that of others. But let us haste to the castle, for Richard meditates punishing some of the subordinate members of the conspiracy, though he has pardoned their principal.'

From the judicial investigations which followed on this occasion, and which are given at length in the Wardour Manuscript, it appears that Maurice de Bracy escaped beyond seas, and went into the service of Philip of France, while Philip de Malvoisin and his brother Albert, the preceptor of Templestowe, were executed, although Waldemar Fitzurse, the soul of the conspiracy, escaped with banishment, and Prince John, for whose behoof it was undertaken, was not even censured by his good-natured brother. No one, however, pitied the fate of the two Malvoisins, who only suffered the death which they had both well deserved, by many acts of falsehood, cruelty, and oppression.

Briefly after the judicial combat, Cedric the Saxon was

summoned to the court of Richard, which, for the purpose of quieting the counties that had been disturbed by the ambition of his brother, was then held at York. Cedric tush'd and pshaw'd more than once at the message; but he refused not obedience. In fact, the return of Richard had quenched every hope that he had entertained of restoring a Saxon dynasty in England; for, whatever head the Saxons might have made in the event of a civil war, it was plain that nothing could be done under the undisputed dominion of Richard, popular as he was by his personal good qualities and military fame, although his administration was wilfully careless — now too indulgent and now allied to despotism.

But, moreover, it could not escape even Cedric's reluctant observation that his project for an absolute union among the Saxons, by the marriage of Rowena and Athelstane, was now completely at an end, by the mutual dissent of both parties concerned. This was, indeed, an event which, in his ardour for the Saxon cause, he could not have anticipated; and even when the disinclination of both was broadly and plainly manifested, he could scarce bring himself to believe that two Saxons of royal descent should scruple, on personal grounds, at an alliance so necessary for the public weal of the nation. But it was not the less certain. Rowena had always expressed her repugnance to Athelstane, and now Athelstane was no less plain and positive in proclaiming his resolution never to pursue his addresses to the lady Rowena. Even the natural obstinacy of Cedric sunk beneath these obstacles, where he, remaining on the point of junction, had the task of dragging a reluctant pair up to it, one with each hand. He made, however, a last vigorous attack on Athelstane, and he found that resuscitated sprout of Saxon royalty engaged, like country squires of our own day, in a furious war with the clergy.

It seems that, after all his deadly menaces against the abbot of St. Edmund's, Athelstane's spirit of revenge, what between the natural indolent kindness of his own disposition, what through the prayers of his mother Edith, attached, like most ladies (of the period), to the clerical order, had terminated in his keeping the abbot and his monks in the dungeons of Coningsburgh for three days on a meagre diet. For this atrocity the abbot menaced him with excommunication, and made out a dreadful list of complaints in the bowels and stomach, suffered by himself and his monks, in consequence of the tyrannical and unjust imprisonment they had sustained.

With this controversy, and with the means he had adopted to counteract this clerical persecution, Cedric found the mind of his friend Athelstane so fully occupied, that it had no room for another idea. And when Rowena's name was mentioned, the noble Athelstane prayed leave to quaff a full goblet to her health, and that she might soon be the bride of his kinsman Wilfred. It was a desperate case, therefore. There was obviously no more to be made of Athelstane; or, as Wamba expressed it, in a phrase which has descended from Saxon times to ours, he was a cock that would not fight.

There remained betwixt Cedric and the determination which the lovers desired to come to only two obstacles — his own obstinacy, and his dislike of the Norman dynasty. The former feeling gradually gave way before the endearments of his ward and the pride which he could not help nourishing in the face of his son. Besides, he was not insensible to the honour of allying his own line to that of Alfred, when the superior claims of the descendant of Edward the Confessor were abandoned for ever. Cedric's aversion to the Norman race of kings was also much undermined — first, by consideration of the impossibility of ridding England of the new dynasty, a feeling which goes far to create loyalty in the subject to the king *de facto*; and, secondly, by the personal attention of King Richard, who delighted in the blunt humour of Cedric, and, to use the language of the Wardour Manuscript, so dealt with the noble Saxon that, ere he had been a guest at court for seven days, he had given his consent to the marriage of his ward Rowena and his son Wilfred of Ivanhoe.

The nuptials of our hero, thus formally approved by his father, were celebrated in the most august of temples, the noble minster of York. The King himself attended, and, from the countenance which he afforded on this and other occasions to the distressed and hitherto degraded Saxons, gave them a safer and more certain prospect of attaining their just rights than they could reasonably hope from the precarious chance of a civil war. The church gave her full solemnities, graced with all the splendour which she of Rome knows how to apply with such brilliant effect.

Gurth, gallantly apparelled, attended as esquire upon his young master, whom he had served so faithfully, and the magnanimous Wamba, decorated with a new cap and a most gorgeous set of silver bells. Sharers of Wilfred's dangers and adversity, they remained, as they had a right to expect, the partakers of his more prosperous career.

But, besides this domestic retinue, these distinguished nuptials were celebrated by the attendance of the high-born Normans, as well as Saxons, joined with the universal jubilee of the lower orders, that marked the marriage of two individuals as a pledge of the future peace and harmony betwixt two races, which, since that period, have been so completely mingled that the distinction has become wholly invisible. Cedric lived to see this union approximate towards its completion; for, as the two nations mixed in society and formed intermarriages with each other, the Normans abated their scorn, and the Saxons were refined from their rusticity. But it was not until the reign of Edward the Third that the mixed language, now termed English, was spoken at the court of London, and that the hostile distinction of Norman and Saxon seems entirely to have disappeared.

It was upon the second morning after this happy bridal that the Lady Rowena was made acquainted by her handmaid Elgitha, that a damsel desired admission to her presence, and solicited that their parley might be without witness. Rowena wondered, hesitated, became curious, and ended by commanding the damsel to be admitted, and her attendants to withdraw.

She entered — a noble and commanding figure, the long white veil, in which she was shrouded, overshadowing rather than concealing the elegance and majesty of her shape. Her demeanour was that of respect, unmingled by the least shade either of fear or of a wish to propitiate favour. Rowena was ever ready to acknowledge the claims, and attend to the feelings, of others. She arose, and would have conducted her lovely visitor to a seat; but the stranger looked at Elgitha, and again intimated a wish to discourse with the Lady Rowena alone. Elgitha had no sooner retired with unwilling steps than, to the surprise of the Lady of Ivanhoe, her fair visitant kneeled on one knee, pressed her hands to her forehead, and bending her head to the ground, in spite of Rowena's resistance, kissed the embroidered hem of her tunic.

'What means this, lady?' said the surprised bride; 'or why do you offer me a deference so unusual?'

'Because to you, Lady of Ivanhoe,' said Rebecca, rising up and resuming the usual quiet dignity of her manner, 'I may lawfully, and without rebuke, pay the debt of gratitude which I owe to Wilfred of Ivanhoe. I am — give the boldness which has offered to you the homage my country — I am the unhappy Jewess for whom your husband

hazarded his life against such fearful odds in the tiltyard of Templestowe.'

'Damsel,' said Rowena, 'Wilfred of Ivanhoe on that day rendered back but in slight measure your unceasing charity towards him in his wounds and misfortunes. Speak, is there aught remains in which he or I can serve thee?'

'Nothing,' said Rebecca, calmly, 'unless you will transmit to him my grateful farewell.'

'You leave England, then?' said Rowena, scarcely recovering the surprise of this extraordinary visit.

'I leave it, lady, ere this moon again changes. My father hath a brother high in favour with Mohammed Boabdil, King of Grenada: thither we go, secure of peace and protection, for the payment of such ransom as the Moslem exact from our people.'

'And are you not then as well protected in England?' said Rowena. 'My husband has favour with the King; the King himself is just and generous.'

'Lady,' said Rebecca, 'I doubt it not; but the people of England are a fierce race, quarrelling ever with their neighbours or among themselves, and ready to plunge the sword into the bowels of each other. Such is no safe abode for the children of my people. Ephraim is a heartless dove; Issachar an overlaboured drudge, which stoops between two burdens. Not in a land of war and blood, surrounded by hostile neighbours, and distracted by internal factions, can Israel hope to rest during her wanderings.'

'But you, maiden,' said Rowena—'you surely can have nothing to fear. She who nursed the sick-bed of Ivanhoe,' she continued, rising with enthusiasm—'she can have nothing to fear in England, where Saxon and Norman will contend who shall most do her honour.'

'Thy speech is fair, lady,' said Rebecca, 'and thy purpose fairer; but it may not be—there is a gulf betwixt us. Our breeding, our faith, alike forbid either to pass over it. Farewell; yet, ere I go, indulge me one request. The bridal veil hangs over thy face; deign to raise it, and let me see the features of which fame speaks so highly.'

'They are scarce worthy of being looked upon,' said Rowena: 'but, expecting the same from my visitant, I remove the veil.'

She took it off accordingly; and, partly from the consciousness of beauty, and partly from bashfulness, she blushed so intensely that cheek, brow, neck, and bosom were suffused with crimson.

Rebecca blushed also; but it was a momentary feeling, and, mastered by higher emotions, passed slowly from her features like the crimson cloud which changes colour when the sun sinks beneath the horizon.

'Lady,' she said, 'the countenance you have deigned to show me will long dwell in my remembrance. There reigns in it gentleness and goodness; and if a speck of the world's pride or vanities may mix with an expression so lovely, how should we chide that which is of earth for bearing some colour of its original? Long, long will I remember your features, and bless God that I leave my noble deliverer united with ——'

She stopped short — her eyes filled with tears. She hastily wiped them, and answered to the anxious inquirers of Rowena — 'I am well, lady — well. But my heart swells when I think of Torquilstone and the lists of Templestowe. Farewell. One, the most trifling, part of my duty remains undischarged. Accept this casket; startle not at its contents.'

Rowena opened the small silver-chased casket, and perceived a carcanet, or necklace, with ear-jewels, of diamonds, which were obviously of immense value.

'It is impossible,' she said, tendering back the casket. 'I dare not accept a gift of such consequence.'

'Yet keep it, lady,' returned Rebecca. 'You have power, rank, command, influence; we have wealth, the source both of our strength and weakness; the value of these toys, a hundred times multiplied, would not influence half so much as your slightest wish. To you, therefore, the gift is of little value; and to me, what I part with is of much less. Let me not think you deem so wretchedly ill of my nation as your commons believe. Think ye that I prize these sparkling fragments of stone above my liberty? or that my father values them in comparison to the honour of his only child? Accept them, lady — to me they are valueless. I will never wear jewels more.'

'You are then unhappy!' said Rowena, struck with the manner in which Rebecca uttered the last words. 'O, remain with us; the counsel of holy men will wean you from your erring law, and I will be a sister to you.'

'No, lady,' answered Rebecca, the same calm melancholy reigning in her soft voice and beautiful features; 'that may not be. I may not change the faith of my fathers like a garment unsuited to the climate in which I seek to dwell; and unhappy, lady, I will not be. He to whom I dedicate my future life will be my comforter, if I do His will.'

'Have you then convents, to one of which you mean to retire?' asked Rowena.

'No, lady,' said the Jewess; 'but among our people, since the time of Abraham downwards, have been women who have devoted their thoughts to Heaven, and their actions to works of kindness to men — tending the sick, feeding the hungry, and relieving the distressed. Among these will Rebecca be numbered. Say this to thy lord, should he chance to inquire after the fate of her whose life he saved.'

There was an involuntary tremour on Rebecca's voice, and a tenderness of accent, which perhaps betrayed more than she would willingly have expressed. She hastened to bid Rowena adieu.

'Farewell,' she said. 'May He who made both Jew and Christian shower down on you His choicest blessings! The bark that wafts us hence will be under weigh ere we can reach the port.'

She glided from the apartment, leaving Rowena surprised as if a vision had passed before her. The fair Saxon related the singular conference to her husband, on whose mind it made a deep impression. He lived long and happily with Rowena, for they were attached to each other by the bonds of early affection, and they loved each other the more from the recollection of the obstacles which had impeded their union. Yet it would be inquiring too curiously to ask whether the recollection of Rebecca's beauty and magnanimity did not recur to his mind more frequently than the fair descendant of Alfred might altogether have approved.

Ivanhoe distinguished himself in the service of Richard, and was graced with farther marks of the royal favour. He might have risen still higher but for the premature death of the heroic Cœur-de-Lion, before the Castle of Chaluz, near Limoges. With the life of a generous, but rash and romantic, monarch perished all the projects which his ambition and his generosity had formed; to whom may be applied, with a slight alteration, the lines composed by Johnson for Charles of Sweden —

His fate was destined to a foreign strand,
A petty fortress and an 'humble' hand;
He left the name at which the world grew pale,
To paint a moral, or adorn a TALE.

NOTES TO IVANHOE

NOTE 1. — THE RANGER OF THE FOREST, p. 7

A MOST sensible grievance of those aggrieved times were the Forest Laws. These oppressive enactments were the produce of the Norman Conquest, for the Saxon laws of the chase were mild and humane; while those of William, enthusiastically attached to the exercise and its rights, were to the last degree tyrannical. The formation of the New Forest bears evidence to his passion for hunting, where he reduced many a happy village to the condition of that one commemorated by my friend, Mr. William Stewart Rose —

Amongst the ruins of the church
The midnight raven found a perch,
A melancholy place;
The ruthless Conqueror cast down,
Woe worth the deed, that little town,
To lengthen out his chase.

The disabling dogs, which might be necessary for keeping flocks and herds, from running at the deer was called *lawing*, and was in general use. The Charter of the Forest, designed to lessen those evils, declares that inquisition, or view, for lawing dogs shall be made every third year, and shall be then done by the view and testimony of lawful men, not otherwise; and they whose dogs shall be then found unlicensed shall give three shillings for mercy; and for the future no man's ox shall be taken for lawing. Such lawing also shall be done by the assize commonly used, and which is, that three claws shall be cut off without the ball of the right foot. See on this subject the *Historical Essay on the Magna Charta of King John* (a most beautiful volume), by Richard Thomson.

NOTE 2. — NEGRO SLAVES, p. 13

The severe accuracy of some critics has objected to the complexion of the slaves of Brian de Bois-Guilbert, as being totally out of costume and propriety. I remember the same objection being made to a set of sable functionaries whom my friend, Mat Lewis, introduced as the guards and mischief-doing satellites of the wicked Baron in his *Castle Spectre*. Mat treated the objection with great contempt, and averred in reply, that he made the slaves black in order to obtain a striking effect of contrast, and that, could he have derived a similar advantage from making his heroine blue, blue she should have been.

I do not pretend to plead the immunities of my order so highly as this; but neither will I allow that the author of a modern antique romance is obliged to confine himself to the introduction of those manners only which can be proved to have absolutely existed in the times he is depicting, so that he restrain himself to such as are plausible and natural, and contain

no obvious anachronism. In this point of view, what can be more natural than that the Templars, who, we know, copied closely the luxuries of the Asiatic warriors with whom they fought, should use the service of the enslaved Africans whom the fate of war transferred to new masters? I am sure, if there are no precise proofs of their having done so, there is nothing, on the other hand, that can entitle us positively to conclude that they never did. Besides, there is an instance in romance.

John of Rampayne, an excellent juggler and minstrel, undertook to effect the escape of Audulf de Bracy, by presenting himself in disguise at the court of the king, where he was confined. For this purpose, he stained 'his hair and his whole body entirely as black as jet, so that nothing was white but his teeth,' and succeeded in imposing himself on the king as an Ethiopian minstrel. He effected, by stratagem, the escape of the prisoner. Negroes, therefore, must have been known in England in the dark ages.

NOTE 3. — ENICHTS, p. 26

The original has enichts, by which the Saxons seem to have designated a class of military attendants, sometimes free, sometimes bondsmen, but always ranking above an ordinary domestic, whether in the royal household or in those of the aldermen and thanes. But the term enicht, now spelt knight, having been received into the English language as equivalent to the Norman word chevalier, I have avoided using it in its more ancient sense, to prevent confusion. — L. T.

NOTE 4. — MORAT AND PIGMENT, p. 28

These were drinks used by the Saxons, as we are informed by Mr. Turner. Morat was made of honey flavoured with the juice of mulberries; pigment was a sweet and rich liquor, composed of wine highly spiced, and sweetened also with honey; the other liquors need no explanation. — L. T.

NOTE 5. — SIR TRISTREM, p. 41

There was no language which the Normans more formally separated from that of common life than the terms of the chase. The objects of their pursuit, whether bird or animal, changed their name each year, and there were a hundred conventional terms to be ignorant of which was to be without one of the distinguishing marks of a gentleman. The reader may consult Dame Juliana Berners' book on the subject. The origin of this science was imputed to the celebrated Sir Tristrem, famous for his tragic intrigue with the beautiful Ysolte. As the Normans reserved the amusement of hunting strictly to themselves, the terms of this formal jargon were all taken from the French language.

NOTE 6. — LINES FROM COLERIDGE, p. 75

These lines are part of an unpublished poem by Coleridge, whose muse so often tantalises with fragments which indicate her powers, while the manner in which she flings them from her betrays her caprice, yet whose unfinished sketches display more talent than the laboured masterpieces of others.

¹ 'Dissertation on Romance and Minstrelsy,' prefixed to Ritson's *Ancient Metrical Romances*, p. clxxxvii.

NOTE 7. — NIDERING, p. 136

There was nothing accounted so ignominious among the Saxons as to merit this disgraceful epithet. Even William the Conqueror, hated as he was by them, continued to draw a considerable army of Anglo-Saxons to his standard by threatening to stigmatise those who staid at home as *nidering*. Bartholinus, I think, mentions a similar phrase which had like influence on the Danes. — L. T.

NOTE 8. — THE JOLLY HERMIT, p. 157

All readers, however slightly acquainted with black letter, must recognise in the clerk of Copmanhurst, Friar Tuck, the buxom confessor of Robin Hood's gang, the curial friar of Fountain's Abbey.

NOTE 9. — MINSTRELRY, p. 158

The realm of France, it is well known, was divided betwixt the Norman and Teutonic race, who spoke the language in which the word 'yeu' is pronounced as *oui*, and the inhabitants of the southern regions, whose speech, bearing some affinity to the Italian, pronounced the same word *oc*. The poets of the former race were called *minstrels*, and their poems *lays*; those of the latter were termed *troubadours*, and their compositions called *sirventes* and other names. Richard, a professed admirer of the joyous science in all its branches, could imitate either the minstrel or troubadour. It is less likely that he should have been able to compose or sing an English ballad; yet so much do we wish to assimilate him of the Lion Heart to the band of warriors whom he led, that the anachronism, if there be one, may readily be forgiven.

NOTE 10. — DERRY-DOWN CHORUS, p. 160

It may be proper to remind the reader that the chorus of 'derry-down' is supposed to be as ancient, not only as the times of the Heptarchy, but as those of the Druids, and to have furnished the chorus to the hymns of those venerable persons when they went to the wood to gather mistletoe.

NOTE 11. — BATTLE OF STAMFORD, p. 100

A great topographical blunder occurred here in former editions. The bloody battle alluded to in the text, fought and won by King Harold, over his brother the rebellious Tostig, and an auxiliary force of Danes or Norsemen, was said, in the text and a corresponding note, to have taken place at Stamford, in Leicestershire, and upon the river Welland. This is a mistake into which the Author has been led by trusting to his memory, and so confounding two places of the same name. The Stamford, Strangford, or Staneford at which the battle really was fought is a ford upon the river Derwent, at the distance of about seven miles from York, and situated in that large and opulent county. A long wooden bridge over the Derwent, the site of which, with one remaining buttress, is still shown to the curious traveller, was furiously contested. One Norwegian long defended it by his single arm, and was at length pierced with a spear thrust through the planks of the bridge from a boat beneath.

The neighbourhood of Stamford, on the Derwent, contains some memorials of the battle. Horse-shoes, swords, and the heads of halberds, or bills, are often found there; one place is called the 'Danes' well,' another the 'Battle flats.' From a tradition that the weapon with which the Norwegian champion was slain resembled a pear, or, as others say, that the

trough or boat in which the soldier floated under the bridge to strike the blow had such a shape, the country people usually begin a great market which is held at Stamford with an entertainment called the *Pear pie feast*, which, after all, may be a corruption of the *Spear pie feast*. For more particulars, Drake's *History of York* may be referred to. The Author's mistake was pointed out to him, in the most obliging manner, by Robert Belt, Esq., of Bossall House. The battle was fought in 1066.

NOTE 12. — TORTURE, p. 108

This horrid species of torture may remind the reader of that to which the Spaniards subjected Guatimozin, in order to extort a discovery of his concealed wealth. But, in fact, an instance of similar barbarity is to be found nearer home and occurs in the annals of Queen Mary's time, containing so many other examples of atrocity. Every reader must recollect that, after the fall of the Catholic Church, and the Presbyterian Church government had been established by law, the rank, and especially the wealth, of the bishops, abbots, priors, and so forth, were no longer vested in ecclesiastics, but in lay impropriators of the church revenues, or, as the Scottish lawyers called them, *titulars* of the temporalities of the benches, though having no claim to the spiritual character of their predecessors in office.

Of these laymen who were thus invested with ecclesiastical revenues, some were men of high birth and rank, like the famous Lord James Stuart, the prior of St. Andrew's, who did not fail to keep for their own use the rents, lands, and revenues of the church. But if, on the other hand, the titulars were men of inferior importance, who had been inducted into the office by the interest of some powerful person, it was generally understood that the new abbot should grant for his patron's benefit such leases and conveyances of the church lands and tithes as might afford their protector the lion's share of the booty. This was the origin of those who were wittily termed *Tulchan*¹ Bishops, being a sort of imaginary prelate, whose image was set up to enable his patron and principal to plunder the benefice under his name.

There were other cases, however, in which men who had got grants of these secularised benefices were desirous of retaining them for their own use, without having the influence sufficient to establish their purpose; and these became frequently unable to protect themselves, however unwilling to submit to the exaction of the feudal tyrant of the district.

Bannatyne, secretary to John Knox, recounts a singular course of oppression practised on one of those titular abbots by the Earl of Cassilis, in Ayrshire, whose extent of feudal influence was so wide that he was usually termed the King of Carrick. We give the fact as it occurs in Bannatyne's *Journal*, only premising that the Journallist held his master's opinions, both with respect to the Earl of Cassilis as an opposer of the king's party, and as being a detester of the practice of granting church revenues to titulars, instead of their being devoted to pious uses, such as the support of the clergy, expense of schools, and the relief of the national poor. He mingles in the narrative, therefore, a well-deserved feeling of execration against the tyrant who employed the torture, with a tone of ridicule towards the patient, as if, after all, it had not been ill-bestowed on such an equivocal and amphibious character as a titular abbot. He entitles his narrative

THE EARL OF CASSILIS' TYRANNY AGAINST A QUICK (i. e. LIVING) MAN

'Master Allan Stewart, friend to Captain James Stewart of Cardonall by

¹ A *tulchan* is a calf's skin stuffed, and placed before a cow who has lost its calf, to induce the animal to part with her milk. The resemblance between such a tulchan and a bishop named to transmit the temporalities of a benefice to some powerful patron is easily understood.

means of the Queen's corrupted court, obtained the abbey of Crossraguel. The said Earl, thinking himself greater than any king in those quarters, determined to have that whole benefice (as he hath divers others) to pay at his pleasure; and because he could not find sic security as his insatiable appetite required, this shift was devised. The said Mr. Allan, being in company with the Laird of Bargany (also a Kennedy), was, by the Earl and his friends, enticed to leave the safeguard which he had with the Laird, and come to make good cheer with the said Earl. The simplicity of the imprudent man was suddenly abused; and so he passed his time with them certain days, which he did in Maybole with Thomas Kennedie, uncle to the said Earl: after which the said Mr. Allan passed, with quiet company, to visit the place and bounds of Crossraguel [his abbacy], of which the said Earl being surely advertised, determined to put in practice the tyranny which long before he had conceived. And so, as king of the country, apprehended the said Mr. Allan, and carried him to the house of Denure, where for a season he was honourably treated (gif a prisoner can think any entertainment pleasing); but after that certain days were spent, and that the Earl could not obtain the fees of Crossraguel according to his awin appetite, he determined to prove gif a collation could work that which neither dinner nor supper could do for a long time. And so the said Mr. Allan was carried to a secret chamber; with him passed the honourable Earl, his worshipful brother, and such as were appointed to be servants at that banquet. In the chamber there was a grit iron chimney, under it a fire; other grit provision was not seen. The first course was—"My Lord Abbot," said the Earl, "it will please you confess here, that with your own consent you remain in my company, because you durst not commit yourself to the hands of others." The Abbot answered, "Would you, my lord, that I should make a manifest lie for your pleasure? The truth is, my lord, it is against my will that I am here; neither yet have I any pleasure in your company." "But ye shall remain with me nevertheless at this time," said the Earl. "I am not able to resist your will and pleasure," said the Abbot, "in this place." "Ye must then obey me," said the Earl; and with that were presented to him certain letters to subscribe, amongst which there was a five years' tack, and a nineteen years' tack, and a charter of feu of all the lands of Crossraguel, with all the clauses necessary for the Earl to hasten him to hell. For gif adultery, sacrilege, oppression, barbarous cruelty, and theft heaped upon theft, deserve hell, the great King of Carrick can no more escape hell for ever than the imprudent Abbot escaped the fire for a season as follows.

'After that the Earl spied repugnance, and saw that he could not come to his purpose by fair means, he commanded his cooks to prepare the banquet; and so first they flayed the sheep, that is, they took off the Abbot's cloathes even to his skin, and next they bound him to the chimney—his legs to the one end and his arms to the other; and so they began to beat [i. e. feed] the fire sometimes to his buttocks, sometimes to his legs, sometimes to his shoulders and arms; and that the roast might not burn, but that it might rest in soppe, they spared not flambing with oil (basting as a cook bastes roasted meat) (Lord, look thou to sic cruelty!) And that the crying of the miserable man should not be heard, they closed his mouth that the voice might be stopped. It may be suspected that some partizan of the King's [Barnley's] murder was there. In that torment they held the poor man, till that often he cried for God's sake to dispatch him; for he had as meikle gold in his awin as time as would buy powder enough to shorten his pain. The famous King of Carrick and his cooks perceiving the roast to be aneuch, commanded it to be tane fra the fire, and the Earl himself began the grace in this manner: "*Benedicite, Jesus Maria*, you are the most obstinate man that ever I saw; gif I had known that ye had been so stubborn, I would not for a thousand crowns have handled you so; I never did so to man before you." And yet he returned to the same practice within two days, and ceased not till that he obtained his foremost purpose, that is, that he had got all his pieces subscriyvit alsowell as ane half-roasted hand could do

it. The Earl thinking himself sure enough so long as he had the half-roasted Abbot in his awin keeping, and yet being ashamed of his presence by reason of his former cruelty, left the place of Denure in the hands of certain of his servants, and the half-roasted Abbot to be kept there as prisoner. The Laird of Bargany, out of whose company the said Abbot had been enticed, understanding (not the extremity), but the retaining of the man, sent to the court, and raised letters of deliverance of the person of the man according to the order, which being disobeyed, the said Earl for his contempt was denounced rebel, and put to the horne. But yet hope was there none, neither to the afflicted to be delivered, neither yet to the purchaser (*i. e.* procurer) of the letters to obtain any comfort thereby: for in that time God was despoiled, and the lawful authority was condemned in Scotland, in hope of the sudden return and regiment of that cruel murderer of her awin husband, of whose lords the said Earl was called one: and yet, oftener than once, he was solemnly sworn to the King and to his Regent.

The Journalist then recites the complaint of the injured Allan Stewart, Commendator of Crossraguel, to the Regent and Privy Council, averring his having been carried, partly by flattery, partly by force, to the black vault of Denure, a strong fortalice, built on a rock overhanging the Irish Channel, where its ruins are still visible. Here he stated he had been required to execute leases and conveyances of the whole churches and parsonages belonging to the Abbey of Crossraguel, which he utterly refused as an unreasonable demand, and the more so that he had already conveyed them to John Stewart of Cardonall, by whose interest he had been made Commendator. The complainant proceeds to state that he was, after many menaces, stript, bound, and his limbs exposed to fire in the manner already described, till, compelled by excess of agony, he subscribed the charter and leases presented to him, of the contents of which he was totally ignorant. A few days afterwards, being again required to execute a ratification of these deeds before a notary and witnesses, and refusing to do so, he was once more subjected to the same torture, until his agony was so excessive that he exclaimed, 'Eye on you, why do you not strike your whingers into me, or blow me up with a barrel of powder, rather than torture me thus unmercifully?' upon which the Earl commanded Alexander Richard, one of his attendants, to stop the patient's mouth with a napkin, which was done accordingly. Thus he was once more compelled to submit to their tyranny. The petition concluded with stating that the Earl, under pretence of the deeds thus iniquitously obtained, had taken possession of the whole place and living of Crossraguel, and enjoyed the profits thereof for three years.

The doom of the Regent and Council shows singularly the total interruption of justice at this calamitous period, even in the most clamant cases of oppression. The Council declined interference with the course of the ordinary justice of the county (which was completely under the said Earl of Cassilis' control), and only enacted that he should forbear molestation of the unfortunate Commendator, under the surety of two thousand pounds Scots. The Earl was appointed also to keep the peace towards the celebrated George Buchanan, who had a pension out of the same abbacy, to a similar extent, and under the like penalty.

The consequences are thus described by the Journalist already quoted:—

'The said Laird of Bargany, perceiving that the ordiner justice could neither help the oppressed nor yet the afflicted, applied his mind to the next remedy, and in the end, by his servants, took the house of Denure, where the poor Abbot was kept prisoner. The bruit flew fra Carrick to Galloway, and so suddenly assembled herd and hyre-man that pertained to the baid of the Kennedies: and so within a few hours was the house of Denure environed again. The Master of Cassilis was the frackast [*i. e.* the readiest or boldest], and would not stay, but in his heat would lay fire to the dungeon, with no small boasting that all enemies within the house should die. He was required and admonished by those that were within to be more

moderate, and not to hazard himself so foolishly. But no admonition would help, till that the wind of an hacquebute blasted his shoulder, and then ceased he from further pursuit in fury. The Laird of Bargany had before purchest [obtained] of the authorities, letters, charging all faithful subjects to the King's Majesty to assist him against that cruel tyrant and man-sworn traitor, the Earl of Cassilis; which letters, with his private writings, he published, and shortly found sic concurrence of Kyle and Cunynghame with his other friends, that the Carrick company drew back fra the house; and so the other approached, furnished the house with more men, delivered the said Mr. Allan, and carried him to Ayre, where, publicly at the market cross of the said town, he declared how cruelly he was entreated, and how the murdered King suffered not sic torment as he did, excepting only he escaped the death; and, therefore, publicly did revoke all things that were done in that extremity, and especially he revoked the subscription of the three writings, to wit, of a fyve yeur tack and nineteen year tack, and of a charter of feu. And so the house remained, and remains (till this day, the 7th of February 1571), in the custody of the sa'd Laird of Bargany and of his servants. And so cruelty was disappointed of proffelt present, and shall be eternallie punished, unless he earnestly repent. And this far for the cruelty committed, to give occasion unto others, and to such as hate the monstrous dealing of degenerate nobility, to look more diligently upon their behaviours, and to paint them forth unto the world, that they themselves may be ashamed of their own beastliness, and that the world may be advertised and admonished to abhor, detest, and avoid the company of all sic tyrants, who are not worthy of the society of men, but ought to be sent suddenly to the devil, with whom they must burn without end, for their contempt of God, and cruelty committed against his creatures. Let Cassilis and his brother be the first to be the example unto others. Amen. Amen.¹

This extract has been somewhat amended or modernised in orthography, to render it more intelligible to the general reader. I have to add, that the Kennedies of Bargany, who interfered in behalf of the oppressed Abbot, were themselves a younger branch of the Cassilis family, but held different politics, and were powerful enough in this and other instances to bid them defiance.

The ultimate issue of this affair does not appear; but as the house of Cassilis are still in possession of the greater part of the feus and leases which belonged to Crossraguel Abbey, it is probable the talons of the King of Carrick were strong enough, in those disorderly times, to retain the prey which they had so mercilessly fixed upon.

I may also add, that it appears by some papers in my possession that the officers or country keepers on the Border were accustomed to torment their prisoners by binding them to the iron bars of their chimneys to extort confession.

NOTE 13. — MANTELETS AND PAVISSES, p. 251

Mantelets were temporary and movable defences formed of planks, under cover of which the assailants advanced to the attack of fortified places of old. Pavisses were a species of large shields covering the whole person, employed on the same occasions.

NOTE 14. — BOLTS AND SHAFTS, p. 252

The bolt was the arrow peculiarly fitted to the cross-bow, as that of the long-bow was called a shaft. Hence the English proverb — 'I will either make a shaft or bolt of it,' signifying a determination to make one use or other of the thing spoken of.

¹ Bannatyne's Journal.

NOTE 15. — ARBLAST, etc., p. 266

The arblast was a cross-bow, the windlace the machine used in bending that weapon, and the quarrell, so called from its square or diamond-shaped head, was the bolt adapted to it.

NOTE 16. — HERALDRY, p. 270

The Author has been here upbraided with false heraldry, in having charged metal upon metal. It should be remembered, however, that heraldry had only its first rude origin during the crusades, and that all the minutiae of the fantastic science were the work of time, and introduced at a much later period. Those who think otherwise must suppose that the Goddess of *Armoirers*, like the Goddess of Arms, sprung into the world completely equipped in all the gaudy trappings of the department she presides over.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

In corroboration of what is above stated, it may be observed, that the arms which were assumed by Godfrey of Boulogne himself, after the conquest of Jerusalem, was a cross counter patent cantoned with four little crosses or, upon a field azure, displaying thus metal upon metal. The heralds have tried to explain this undeniable fact in different modes; but Ferne gallantly contends that a prince of Godfrey's qualities should not be bound by the ordinary rules. The Scottish Nisbet and the same Ferne insist that the chiefs of the crusade must have assigned to Godfrey this extraordinary and unwonted coat-of-arms in order to induce those who should behold them to make inquiries; and hence give them the name of *arma inquirenda*. But with reverence to these grave authorities, it seems unlikely that the assembled princes of Europe should have adjudged to Godfrey a coat armorial so much contrary to the general rule, if such rule had then existed; at any rate, it proves that metal upon metal, now accounted a solecism in heraldry, was admitted in other cases similar to that in the text. See Ferne's *Blazon of Gentry*, p. 238; edition 1586. Nisbet's *Heraldry*, vol. i. p. 113; second edition.

NOTE 17. — BARRIERS, p. 272

Every Gothic castle and city had, beyond the outer walls, a fortification composed of palisades, called the barriers, which were often the scene of severe skirmishes, as these must necessarily be carried before the walls themselves could be approached. Many of those valliant feats of arms which adorn the chivalrous pages of Froissart took place at the barriers of besieged places.

NOTE 18. — INCIDENT FROM *GRAND CYRUS*, p. 294

The Author has some idea that this passage is imitated from the appearance of Philidaspes, before the divine Mandane, when the city of Babylon is on fire, and he proposes to carry her from the flames. But the thought, if there be one, would be rather too severely punished by the penance of searching for the original passage through the interminable volumes of the *Grand Cyrus*.

NOTE 19. — ULRICA'S DEATH-SONG, p. 299

It will readily occur to the antiquary that these verses are intended to imitate the antique poetry of the Scalds—the minstrels of the old Scandinavians—the race, as the Laureate so happily terms them,

Stern to inflict, and stubborn to endure,
Who smiled in death.

The poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, after their civilisation and conversion, was of a different and softer character; but in the circumstances of Ulrica she may be not unnaturally supposed to return to the wild strains which animated her forefathers during the time of Paganism and untamed ferocity.

NOTE 20. — RICHARD CŒUR-DE-LION, p. 312

The interchange of a cuff with the jolly priest is not entirely out of character with Richard I., if romances read him aright. In the very curious romance on the subject of his adventures in the Holy Land, and his return from thence, it is recorded how he exchanged a pugilistic favour of this nature while a prisoner in Germany. His opponent was the son of his principal warder, and was so imprudent as to give the challenge to this barter of buffets. The King stood forth like a true man, and received a blow which staggered him. In requital, having previously waxed his hand, a practice unknown, I believe, to the gentlemen of the modern fancy, he returned the box on the ear with such interest as to kill his antagonist on the spot. See in Ellis's *Specimens of English Romance*, that of *Cœur-de-Lion*.

NOTE 21. — JORVAULX ABBEY, p. 316

This Cistercian abbey was situate in the pleasant valley of the river Jore, or Ure, in the North Riding of Yorkshire. It was erected in the year 1156, and was destroyed in 1537. For nearly three centuries, the ruins were left in a state nearly approaching to utter demolition; but at length they were traced out and cleared at the expense of Thomas Earl of Aylesbury, in the year 1807. The name of the abbey occurs in a variety of forms, such as Jorvaulx, Jervaux, Gerveux, Gervaulx, Jorvall, Jorevaux, etc. In Whitaker's *History of Richmondshire*, vol. I., a ground-plan of the building is given, along with notices of the monuments of the old abbots and other dignitaries which are still preserved (*Laing*).

NOTE 22. — HEDGE-PRIESTS, p. 324

It is curious to observe, that in every state of society some sort of ghostly consolation is provided for the members of the community, though assembled for purposes diametrically opposite to religion. A gang of beggars have their parico, and the banditti of the Apennines have among them persons acting as monks and priests, by whom they are confessed, and who perform mass before them. Unquestionably, such reverend persons, in such a society, must accommodate their manners and their morals to the community in which they live; and if they can occasionally obtain a degree of reverence for their supposed spiritual gifts, are, on most occasions, loaded with unmerciful ridicule, as possessing a character inconsistent with all around them.

Hence the fighting parson in the old play of *Sir John Oldcastle*, and the famous friar of Robin Hood's band. Nor were such characters ideal. There exists a monition of the Bishop of Durham against irregular churchmen of this class, who associated themselves with Border robbers, and desecrated the holiest offices of the priestly function, by celebrating them for the benefit of thieves, robbers, and murderers, amongst ruins and in caverns of the earth, without regard to canonical form, and with torn and dirty attire, and maimed rites, altogether improper for the occasion.

NOTE 23. — SLAYERS OF BECKET, p. 332

Reginald Fitzurse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Richard Brito were the gentlemen of Henry the Second's household who, instigated

by some passionate expressions of their sovereign, slew the celebrated Thomas-a-Becket.

NOTE 24. — PRECEPTORIES, p. 337

The establishments of the Knights Templars were called preceptories, and the title of those who presided in the order was preceptor; as the principal Knights of Saint John were termed commanders, and their houses commanderies. But these terms were sometimes, it would seem, used indiscriminately. — Such an establishment formerly existed at Temple Newsam, in the West Riding, near Leeds (*Laing*).

NOTE 25. — UT LEO SEMPER VERIATUR, p. 340

In the ordinances of the Knights of the Temple, this phrase is repeated in a variety of forms, and occurs in almost every chapter, as if it were the signal-word of the order; which may account for its being so frequently put in the Grand Master's mouth.

NOTE 26. — LOCKSLEY, p. 403

From the ballads of Robin Hood, we learn that this celebrated outlaw, when in disguise, sometimes assumed the name of Locksley, from a village where he was born, but where situated we are not distinctly told. —

According to tradition, a village of this name was the birthplace of Robin Hood, while the county in which it was situated remains undetermined. There is a broadside printed about the middle of the 17th century with the title of *A New Ballad of Bold Robin Hood, showing his birth, etc., calculated for the meridian of Staffordshih*. But in the ballad itself, it says —

In Locksley town, in merry Nottinghamshire,
In merry sweet Locksley town,
There bold Robin Hood, he was born and was bred,
Bold Robin of famous renown.

Ritson says, it may serve quite as well for Derbyshire or Kent as for Nottingham (*Laing*).

NOTE 27. — CASTLE OF CONINGSBURGH, p. 413

When I last saw this interesting ruin of ancient days, one of the very few remaining examples of Saxon fortification, I was strongly impressed with the desire of tracing out a sort of theory on the subject, which, from some recent acquaintance with the architecture of the ancient Scandinavians, seemed to me peculiarly interesting. I was, however, obliged by circumstances to proceed on my journey, without leisure to take more than a transient view of Coningsburgh. Yet the idea dwells so strongly in my mind, that I feel considerably tempted to write a page or two in detailing at least the outline of my hypothesis, leaving better antiquaries to correct or refute conclusions which are perhaps too hastily drawn.

Those who have visited the Zetland Islands are familiar with the description of castles called by the inhabitants burghs, and by the Highlanders — for they are also to be found both in the Western Isles and on the mainland — duns. Pennant has engraved a view of the famous Dun Borna-dilla in Glenelg; and there are many others, all of them built after a peculiar mode of architecture, which argues a people in the most primitive state of society. The most perfect specimen is that upon the island of Mousa, near to the Mainland of Zetland, which is probably in the same state as when inhabited.

It is a single round tower, the wall curving in slightly, and then turning outward again in the form of a dice-box, so that the defenders on the top might the better protect the base. It is formed of rough stones, selected with care, and laid in courses or circles, with much compactness, but without cement of any kind. The tower has never, to appearance, had roofing of any sort: a fire was made in the centre of the space which it incloses, and originally the building was probably little more than a wall drawn as a sort of screen around the great council fire of the tribe. But, although the means or ingenuity of the builders did not extend so far as to provide a roof, they supplied the want by constructing apartments in the interior of the walls of the tower itself. The circumvallation formed a double inclosure, the inner side of which was, in fact, two feet or three feet distant from the other, and connected by a concentric range of long flat stones, thus forming a series of concentric rings or stories of various heights, rising to the top of the tower. Each of these stories or galleries has four windows, facing directly to the points of the compass, and rising, of course, regularly above each other. These four perpendicular ranges of windows admitted air, and, the fire being kindled, heat, or smoke at least, to each of the galleries. The access from gallery to gallery is equally primitive. A path, on the principle of an inclined plane, turns round and round the building like a screw, and gives access to the different stories, intersecting each of them in its turn, and thus gradually rising to the top of the wall of the tower. On the outside there are no windows; and I may add that an inclosure of a square, or sometimes a round, form gave the inhabitants of the burgh an opportunity to secure any sheep or cattle which they might possess.

Such is the general architecture of that very early period when the Northmen swept the seas, and brought to their rude houses, such as I have described them, the plunder of polished nations. In Zetland there are several scores of these burghs, occupying in every case capes, headlands, islets, and similar places of advantage singularly well chosen. I remember the remains of one upon an island in a small lake near Lerwick, which at high tide communicates with the sea, the access to which is very ingenious, by means of a causeway or dike, about three or four inches under the surface of the water. This causeway makes a sharp angle in its approach to the burgh. The inhabitants, doubtless, were well acquainted with this, but strangers, who might approach in a hostile manner, and were ignorant of the curve of the causeway, would probably plunge into the lake, which is six or seven feet in depth at the least. This must have been the device of some Vauban or Cohorn of those early times.

The style of these buildings evinces that the architect possessed neither the art of using lime or cement of any kind, nor the skill to throw an arch, construct a roof, or erect a stair: and yet, with all this ignorance, showed great ingenuity in selecting the situation of burghs, and regulating the access to them, as well as neatness and regularity in the erection, since the buildings themselves show a style of advance in the arts scarcely consistent with the ignorance of so many of the principal branches of architectural knowledge.

I have always thought that one of the most curious and valuable objects of antiquaries has been to trace the progress of society by the efforts made in early ages to improve the rudeness of their first expedients, until they either approach excellence, or, as is most frequently the case, are supplied by new and fundamental discoveries, which supersede both the earlier and ruder system and the improvements which has been ingrafted upon it. For example, if we conceive the recent discovery of gas to be so much improved and adapted to domestic use as to supersede all other modes of producing domestic light, we can already suppose, some centuries afterwards, the heads of a whole Society of Antiquaries half turned by the discovery of a pair of patent snuffers, and by the learned theories which would be brought forward to account for the form and purpose of so singular an implement.

Following some such principle, I am inclined to regard the singular Castle of Coningsburgh—I mean the Saxon part of it—as a step in advance from the rude architecture, if it deserves the name, which must have been common to the Saxons as to other Northmen. The builders had attained the art of using cement, and of roofing a building—great improvements on the original burgh. But in the round keep, a shape only seen in the most ancient castles, the chambers excavated in the thickness of the walls and buttresses, the difficulty by which access is gained from one story to those above it, Coningsburgh still retains the simplicity of its origin, and shows by what slow degrees man proceeded from occupying such rude and inconvenient lodgings as were afforded by the galleries of the Castle of Mousa to the more splendid accommodations of the Norman castles, with all their stern and Gothic graces.

I am ignorant if these remarks are new, or if they will be confirmed by closer examination; but I think that, on a hasty observation, Coningsburgh offers means of curious study to those who may wish to trace the history of architecture back to the times preceding the Norman Conquest.

It would be highly desirable that a cork model should be taken of the Castle of Mousa, as it cannot be well understood by a plan.

The Castle of Coningsburgh is thus described:—

‘The castle is large, the outer walls standing on a pleasant ascent from the river, but much overtopped by a high hill, on which the town stands, situated at the head of a rich and magnificent vale, formed by an amphitheatre of woody hills, in which flows the gentle Don. Near the castle is a barrow, said to be Hengist’s tomb. The entrance is flanked to the left by a round tower, with a sloping base, and there are several similar in the outer wall; the entrance has piers of a gate, and on the east side the ditch and bank are double and very steep. On the top of the churchyard wall is a tombstone, on which are cut in high relief two ravens, or such-like birds. On the south side of the churchyard lies an ancient stone, ridged like a coffin, on which is carved a man on horseback; and another man with a shield encountering a vast winged serpent, and a man bearing a shield behind him. It was probably one of the rude crosses not uncommon in churchyards in this county. See it engraved on the plate of crosses for this volume, plate 14, fig 1. The name of Coningsburgh, by which this castle goes in the old editions of the *Britannia*, would lead one to suppose it the residence of the Saxon kings. It afterwards belonged to King Harold. The Conqueror bestowed it on William de Warren, with all its privileges and jurisdiction, which are said to have extended over twenty-eight towns. At the corner of the area, which is of an irregular form, stands the great tower, or keep, placed on a small hill of its own dimensions, on which lie six vast projecting buttresses, ascending in a steep direction to prop and support the building, and continued upwards up the side as turrets. The tower within forms a complete circle, twenty-one feet in diameter, the walls fourteen feet thick. The ascent into the tower is by an exceeding deep flight of steep steps, four feet and a half wide, on the south side leading to a low doorway, over which is a circular arch crossed by a great transom stone. Within this door is the staircase which ascends straight through the thickness of the wall, not communicating with the room on the first floor, in whose centre is the opening to the dungeon. Neither of these lower rooms is lighted except from a hole in the floor of the third story; the room in which, as well as in that above it, is finished with compact smooth stonework, both having chimney-pieces, with an arch resting on triple clustered pillars. In the third story, or guard-chamber, is a small recess with a loop-hole, probably a bedchamber, and in that floor above a niche for a saint or holy-water pot. Mr. King imagines this a Saxon castle of the first ages of the Heptarchy. Mr. Watson thus describes it. From the first floor to the second story (third from the ground) is a way by a stair in the wall five feet wide. The next staircase is approached by a

ladder, and ends at the fourth story from the ground. Two yards from the door, at the head of this stair, is an opening nearly east, across which is a treading on the ledge of the wall, which diminishes eight inches each story, and this last opening leads into a room or chapel ten feet by twelve, and fifteen or sixteen high, arched with freestone, and supported by small circular columns of the same, the capitals and arches Saxon. It has an east window, and on each side in the wall, about four feet from the ground, a stone basin, with a hole and iron pipe to convey the water into or through the wall. This chapel is in one of the buttresses, but no sign of it without, for even the window, though large within, is only a long narrow loophole, scarcely to be seen without. On the left side of this chapel is a small oratory, eight by six in the thickness of the wall, with a niche in the wall, and enlightened by a like loophole. The fourth stair from the ground, ten feet west from the chapel door, leads to the top of the tower through the thickness of the wall, which at top is but three yards. Each story is about fifteen feet high, so that the tower will be seventy-five feet from the ground. The inside forms a circle, whose diameter may be about twelve feet. The well at the bottom of the dungeon is piled with stones, — Gough's Edition of Camden's *Britannia*. Second Edition, vol. iii. p. 267.

NOTE 28. — RAISING OF ATHELSTANE, p. 422

The resuscitation of Athelstane has been much criticised, as too violent a breach of probability, even for a work of such fantastic character. It was a *tour-de-force*, to which the Author was compelled to have recourse by the vehement entreaties of his friend and printer, who was inconsolable on the Saxon being conveyed to the tomb.

GLOSSARY

OF

WORDS, PHRASES, AND ALLUSIONS

- ACRAFFE**, a clasp, consisting of a hook and a ring
- ALDERMAN**, or **BALDORMAN**, was in ancient Saxon times a nobleman of the highest rank
- ALDHELM OF MALMESBURY**, a renowned scholar and church-builder of the 7th century
- ARBER**, the pluck of a deer
- ARBLAST**, cross-bow
- ARRET**, a decree
- ARTHUR'S OVEN**, a remarkable Roman building in Larbert parish, Stirling-shire, demolished in 1743
- ASPER**, a small silver Turkish coin = $\frac{1}{4}$ th penny
- ASSOLVIE**, absolve
- AUVERTE MALUM EX VOBIS**, Remove the evil from among you
- AVISED**, apprised, informed
- BACA**, VALE OF, mentioned in Psalm lxxiv. 6
- BANDNAU**, a narrow band or fillet
- BARTHOLOMEUS, THOMAS**, author of *Antiquitates Danice* (1689)
- BATA!** Enough! no matter
- BECCAFICO**, a kind of black-cap
- BERT**, feed (a fire)
- BENEDICTE, MRS FILE**, Bless you, my children
- BIOGH**, a child's cap
- BLACK SANCTUS**, a burlesque of the Sanctus of the Roman Missal; a tumultuous uproar
- BOARDIE**, king of Granada and king of Malaga, both
- inventions as regards the period of the novel
- BORROW**, or **BORON**, bail, suretyship, pledge
- BOW-HAND**, the left hand, hence wide of the mark
- BROMENHOLM**, on the east coast of Norfolk, where a priory was built early in the 12th century
- BROWN-BELL**, a sort of halberd, painted brown, and carried by soldiers and watchmen
- BRUISING-MATCH**, prize-fight
- BRUIT**, rumour, report
- BULL-SEGAR**, a bogie, spectre
- BURREL**, or **BORREL**, coarse cloth, frieze
- BYZANT**, a Byzantine gold coin, varying in value from 10s. to £1
- CABALIST**, one versed in secret sciences
- CAP-À-PIS**, from head to foot
- CAPUL**, or **CAPLE**, a horse, working horse
- CARDESCU**, old French silver coin = 1s. 6d. to 2s. 1½d.
- CAVE, ADSUM**, Beware, I am here
- CHAMFRON**, frontlet or head-piece for an armed horse
- CHARNWOOD**, a forest in the north of Leicester-shire
- CHIAN WINE**, wine of Chios, an island of Asia Minor; it was celebrated among the ancient Greeks
- CLIFFORD'S GATE**, in Clifford's Tower, beside the castle at York, but it did not exist in Richard's reign
- CLIFT WITHIN THE RING**, mediæval method of sweating coinage
- CLOUT**, a pin in the centre of a target fixing it to the butt
- COMORN**, or **COMORON**, **BARON VAN**, called the Dutch **Vauban**, a skilful military engineer of the 17th century
- COMMENDATOR**, holder of an ecclesiastical benefice, as an addition to one already held or in temporary trust
- COMPOSTELLA**, **SCALLOP SHELL OF**, the symbol of St. James the Greater, whose shrine was at Compostella, 30 miles from Corunna in Spain
- CONFITEOR**, I confess
- CONINGSBURGH**, or *kuning's* (*cyning's*) *burg*, or *king's burg* = king's castle
- CRI DE GUERRE**, a war-cry
- CROES**, a coin stamped with *ΕΥΡΩΤΕΣ*
- CROWD**, or **CROWTH**, a species of violin; **CROWDER**, a fiddler
- CURÉN**, the portion of the deer given to the hounds
- CURTAL FRIAR**, lower order of friar, wearing a short gown or habit
- CUT AND LONG TAIL**, of every kind
- CYPRUS**, a kind of crape
- DE COMMELITONIBUS TEMPLI**, etc. (p. 349), concerning the brethren in arms of the holy community of the Temple who frequent the company of misguided

- women for the gratification of their fleshly lusts
DE LECTIOIBUS LITTERARUM, on the reading of letters
DEMI-VOLTE, a half-turn
DE PROFUNDIS CLAMAVI, Out of the depths have I called
DERRING-DO, desperate courage
DESPARDIEUX! By God!
DENTRIES, war-horses
DETUR DIGNIONI, Let it be given to him who is more worthy
DEUS FACIAT SALVAM, etc. (p. 315), God keep your reverence safe
DEUS VOMACUM, God be with you, a priest
DORTOUS, or **DORTER**, the dormitory of a monastery
DRAFF, refuse, hogs' wash
DRAGON of **WANTLEY**, a monster slain by one More of More Hall. See Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*
DRINK HALL, I drink your health
DUNHILLS, low-bred fellows
KADMER, a monk of Canterbury, who wrote a *History of England* and lives of Anselm and other distinguished English churchmen
EL JARRO, a javelin used in Oriental games, especially in mock-fights on horseback
INCROUCH, behind the saddle
EPICOLA, the groundwork or story of an epic
ERICHO. See Lucan's witch
ESTRADA, a slightly raised platform
ET VOBS; **QUISO**, etc. (p. 235), And with you; O most reverend master, I beseech you, in your mercy
EUMÆUS, the swineherd of Odysseus. See *Odys.* xv.
EXCEPTIS EXCIPIENDIS, except what is to be excepted
EXCOMMUNICABO VOS, I shall excommunicate you
FAIRE LE MOULINET, to twirl about, flourish a quarter-staff
FAITES VOS DEVOIRS, **PREUX CHEVALIERS**, Do your duty, brave knights
FETTER-BENT, key of the *insane*
FIAT VOLUNTAS TUA, Thy will be done
FLANNING, basting roasted meat
FLEURS-DE-LIS, heraldic lilies
FLINTS, men of the right sort
FLOX-SILK, foam-milk
FOLK-FIRE and **SACLESS**, a law-ful freeman
FOX-BARTHS, fox-holes
FRACENT, boldest, readiest
FREEDOM OF THE RULE, freedom granted to a Scots advocate to plead at the English bar
FRUCTUS TEMPORUM, *The Chronicles of England with the Fruit of Times*, called *The Chronicle of St. Alban's*, also *Carlon's Chronicle*
FUSTIAN (words), ranting, bombastic jargon
FUTTY BANDIAN, thirsty bandiers or comrades
GABERDINE, a Jew's robe of *wool*
GARE LE CORBEAU, Beware of the raven.
GARLAND, a collection of ballads or short poems
GAUDS, flimsy ornaments, gimcracks
GELIDAS LETO, etc. (p. xxi), To various carcases by turns she flies, And, gripping with her gory fingers, tries, Till one of perfect organs can be found, And fibrous lungs uninjur'd by a wound. (Rowe)
GLAIVE, a sword, spear
GOSPEL OF ST. NICODERMUS, an ancient spurious writing, called also the *Acts of P late*
GRAND CYRUS, a long-winded romance in 10 vols. (1649-53) by Mdlle. de Scud. i.
GUILDER, a coin worth 1s. 8d.
GYNMAL, **GIMMAL**, or **GEMEL RING**, a sort of double ring
HACQUEBUTE, or **HACHEBUT**, harquebus, a primitive firearm
HACQUETON, or **ACTON**, a quilted vest worn under the coat of mail
HAFLING, the half of a silver penny
HENCOINT, or **HENEST**, means stallion, hence the white horse (p. 413) as the Saxon ensign
HERSHIP, pillage, marauding
HERTHA, more correctly Northus, the goddess Earth of the ancient Slavs of Prussia
HEXHAMSHIRE, formerly a county palatine, governed by the bishops of Hexham
HILDSIE, base, cowardly
HOS DEAR TO ST. ANTHONY, Pigs were under his special care
HOURI, a beauty of the Mohammedan Paradise
HUMMING, causing a humming in the head, because metheglin, and so beer, was thought to make the head hum like the hive from which the honey of the metheglin was taken
HYES MEN, or **HIERMAN**, a retainer, hired servant
IFRIM, or **INFERN**, the hell of the Old Saxons
IL BONDOSANT. See *The Robber Caliph*; or, *Adventures of Haroun Alraschid with the Princess of Persia and the Beautiful Zuleika*, in H. Weber's *Tales of the East* (1812), i. 475
INCH MERRIN, or **MT. MERRIN**, an island in Loch Lomond
INTER RES SACRAS, accounted *sancti*
KARUM FIE, a pie containing nightingales and beccaficos (blackcaps)
LAC ACIDUM, sour milk; **LAC DULCE**, sweet milk
LAISSEZ ALLEZ! Let go! away!
LARGESSE, a gift
LA ROYNE DE LA BEAUTE ET DES AMOURS, the Queen of Beauty and of Love
LATRO FAMOUS, a noted robber
LAUREATE, Robert Southey
LE DON D'AMOUREUSE MERCI, the highest favour that love can bestow
LEE-GAGE, the safe or sheltered side
L'ENFANT CAITÉ, the spoiled child
LIARD, small French coin, current after the 14th century = one-third of a silver penny English
LOGAN, JOHN, an eloquent Scottish preacher, who was dismissed (1786) for intemperance.
LUCAN'S WITCH, *Erictho*, in *Pharsalia*, Bk. vi
MANOUND, a contemptuous name for Mahomet, Mahound and Ternagaunt figured as devils or drub-

ling-boys in some of the medieval mystery-plays
MAIL, baggage, trunk
MALVOSE, malnsey, sweet wine
MANOCOE, a shapeless piece, fragment
MARCIPIA, a steward, purveyor
MARCUA, an Anglo-Saxon coin = about 2s. 6d.
MARSCHEL, military engine for throwing stones
MANUS IMPONERE IN SERVOS DOMINI, to lay hands on the servants of the Lord
MARAVEDI, copper coin = less than a farthing
MARQUIN, Morocco, goat's leather
MATILDA, daughter of Malcolm Canmore and Margart, married Henry I. of England, and was the mother of the Empress Matilda, with whom the text obviously confounds her
MAUGH, despite
MELI, meddle, busy oneself
MARK, or **MARK**, old coin, worth 13s. 4d.; a weight = generally 8 ounces
MISTA, or **MIST**, one of the Valkyrie or Battle Maidens
MONK OF CROYDON, corrected Croyland or Crowland, was Abbot Ingulphus (1065-1109), reputed author of a *History of the Monastery of Crowland*, which has been shown, since Scott wrote, to be a 13th or 14th century fiction
MOOR, a bugle-call at the death of a stag
MORT DE MA VIE! Death of my life! a strong affirmative
MOTS, notes upon the bugle, distinguished in old treatises on hunting, not by musical characters, but by written words
MOUNT CARMEL, MONASTERY OF, the mother monastery of the Carmelite order, on the coast of Palestine
MOUNT JOYE ST. DENIS, a war-cry of the French Crusaders
M-PHERRON, author of the *Songs of Ossian*
MUSCADENE, or **MUSCADEL**, a sweet wine made from muscat grapes
NEBULO QUIDAM, good-for-nothing fellow, scamp

NEEDWOOD, a royal forest beside the Trent, Staffordshire and Derbyshire
NOMELIA, or **NUMMEL**, the entrails of a deer
NOOK (of pasty), a quarter or triangular cut of pie
OUBLIVETTE, a dungeon, deep pit or shaft in a dungeon
OUTRECAUDANCE, insolence, presumption
OVER GOD'S ROADSIDE! Quit! impossible! God forbid!
PAN AMOURA, illicitly, unlawfully
PARNELL'S TALE, *A Fairy Tale, in the Ancient English Style*, by Thomas Parnell, a minor Queen Anne poet
PATRECO, beggars' name for their hedge-priest or orator
PAX VOBISCUM, Peace be with you
PAYNIN, pagan
PENNYANT, THOMAS, a keenly observant naturalist and traveller of the 18th century
PERIAFT, a charm against disease
PHINEAS, or **PHINEHAS**, the grandson of Aaron. See Numbers xiv. 7, 8
POUNCET BOX, a box containing perfumes
PROPIED, promised
PROPTER NECESSITATEM, etc. (p. 317), in case of necessity and to drive away the cold
POT TO THE HORNE, declared a rebel
PYET, magpie
QUARE PRIMUMERUNT GENTES? Why do the heathen rage?
RABBI JACOB BEN TUDELA. Possibly a confused allusion to Benjamin of Tudela, a 12th century Spanish Jew, and renowned traveller
RASCAILLE, base, ignoble
REAL, a Spanish silver coin = 2d.
RECHEAT, a signal to the hounds to return from following a false scent
RESCOUSSE, rescue
REX DELECTABILITUR PULCHRITUDE TUA, The king shall rejoice in thy beauty
RHENO, a reindeer skin; hence any piece of skin or fur clothing

RING, CLIFT WITHIN THE. See Clift within the ring
ROLLO, or **ROLOF THE GANGER**, the ancestor of the Normans
ROTE, a sort of guitar, or hurdy-gurdy, the strings of which were managed by a wheel (*rota*)
RULES, FREEDOM OF THE. See Freedom of the rules
RUNLET, a small barrel
SA', SAIN, bless
SACRING BELL, small bell used at high mass
ST CHRISTOPHER, the patron saint of foresters; an image of the saint worn as an ornament
ST. DUNSTON, Saxon saint and archbishop of Canterbury, 10th century
ST. HILDA OF WHITBY, a Northumbrian abbess of the 7th century, famous for her saintly life
ST. NICHOLAS'S CLERKS, robbers, highwaymen
ST. NICODIMUS. See Gospel of St. Nicodemus
ST. OMER, GODFREY DE, more generally written Geoffroi de St. Adhemar
SARCTUS, BLACE. See Black sanctus
SCALLOP SHELL. See Compostella
SCLAVYN, or **SCLAVONIAN**, a pilgrim's cloak, resembling a garment worn in Slavonian countries
SEMPER PERCUTIATUR, etc. (p. 347), The ravening lion is ever to be beaten down
SENDAL, light silk stuff
SEIL, seal
SIMARRE, or **SIMAR**, a woman's loose light robe
SIMMEL BREAD, a rich sweet cake, made of fine flour, offered as a gift at Christmas and Easter, and especially the Fourth Sunday in Lent (Simmel Sunday)
SI QUIS, EVADENTE DIABOLO, If any one at the persuasion of the devil
SIR BEVIS, of Hampton or Southampton, the hero of a medieval romance
SIR GUY, of Warwick, the hero of a medieval romance
SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, an Elizabethan play rejected from Shakespeare's

- DRAMAS**, assigned to Thomas Heywood
- DRUGULA**, or **DRUGUT**, one of the Valkyrie or Battle Maidens
- DRUT-BOUND**, a death-bound, hand-bound
- SOLDAN OF TARMOND**, sultan or emperor of a state on the southern shores of the Black Sea, founded early in the 13th century
- SOLLER** or **SOLLAR CHAMBER**, a garret or upper chamber
- SOUL-SCAT**, a funeral due paid to the church
- SPRINGAL**, a youth
- STUCK-FISH**, dried fish, generally cod
- STOOT-BALL**, an old English game, something resembling cricket, played by women
- STRIKE, FIRST** (of ale), brewed with the full measure (strike) of malt
- STRIKE PANTHERS**, cut open the wine-skin (*pantocoria*), and so breach the cask. 'Panther' may be a slang corruption of 'partner'
- SUNQUENT**, insolence, presumption
- TACK**, lease
- TE TERROR**, the service-book, on which oaths were sworn
- TROW** and **MANE**, thrall and bondsman
- THRALL**, a serf, bondsman
- TOLL-DIAN** (miller's), the dish in which he received his fees for grinding corn; hence, the head
- TOTTY**, tottery, unsteady
- TRANSMU**, to transform, change
- TRACHTOR**, conjurer
- TRINKETING**, dealing in, intriguig
- TROWL**, to push, pass
- TWELFTH NIGHT**, the eve of the Epiphany, which falls twelve days after Christmas
- UNDERLIN**, to be responsible for
- UNMOURNED**, not having received the eucharist
- URUS**, a wild ox
- UT PUGIANTUR OCTULA**, Let all kissing be avoided
- UT LEO**, etc. (p. 340), Let the lion always be beaten down; cf. Note 25, p. 460
- VAIL**, to lower, doff
- VAIR**, a kind of fur, believed to have been that of the squirrel
- VALE TANDEN**, NON IMMORARI, Farewell, then, and do not forget me
- VERT** and **VERISOW**, the forest trees and the game amongst them
- VIS PRIVÉE**, private life
- VINSAUF**, GREGORY DE, an English writer of the 12th century, wrote *Itinerary of Richard, King of the English, in the Holy Land*
- VINUM LÆTIFICAT**, etc. (p. 346), Wine maketh glad the heart of man
- VIRELAI**, a type of Old French short poem
- VORTIGERN**, a Christian British prince, who invited over Hengist the Saxon, and married his daughter Rowena
- WARR HALL**, To your health
- WANTLEY, DRAGON** or *See* Dragon of Wantley
- WARLOCK**, wizard; North-Son Warlock, Sir Walter Scott
- WASSAIL**, ale or wine spiced; a health, toast
- WASTEL CAKES**, cakes made of the finest white wheat flour
- WATLING STREET**, an old Roman road, running from Dover, through London and York, to the neighbourhood of Newcastle-on-Tyne
- WHITE HORSE BRIDGE**, *See* Hengist
- WHITTLE**, a large knife
- WINPLE**, a veil or hood
- WITENAGEMOTE**, the Anglo-Saxon great council or parliament
- WODEN**, Odin, the chief god of ancient Teutonic mythology
- ZECCHIN**, or **SEQUIN**, a Venetian gold coin = about 9s. 4d.
- ZERNESCHOK**, or **CHERNHOSE**, the Black God or Devil of the Wende and Prussian Slavs

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THE
WAVERLEY NOVELS
OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT
VOLUME XI
—♦—
THE ABBOT

THE ABBOT;
BEING THE SEQUEL TO
THE MONASTERY

INTRODUCTION TO THE ABBOT

FROM what is said in the Introduction to the *Monastery*, it must necessarily be inferred that the Author considered that romance as something very like a failure. It is true, the booksellers did not complain of the sale, because, unless on very felicitous occasions, or on those which are equally the reverse, literary popularity is not gained or lost by a single publication. Leisure must be allowed for the tide both to flow and ebb. But I was conscious that, in my situation, not to advance was in some degree to recede, and being naturally unwilling to think that the principle of decay lay in myself, I was at least desirous to know of a certainty whether the degree of discountenance which I had incurred was now owing to an ill-managed story or an ill-chosen subject.

I was never, I confess, one of those who are willing to suppose the brains of an author to be a kind of milk, which will not stand above a single creaming, and who are eternally harping to young authors to husband their efforts, and to be chary of their reputation, lest it grow hackneyed in the eyes of men. Perhaps I was, and have always been, the more indifferent to the degree of estimation in which I might be held as an author because I did not put so high a value as many others upon what is termed literary reputation in the abstract, or at least upon the species of popularity which had fallen to my share; for though it were worse than affectation to deny that my vanity was satisfied at my success in the department in which chance had in some measure enlisted me, I was, nevertheless, far from thinking that the novelist or romance-writer stands high in the ranks of literature. But I spare the reader farther egotism on this subject, as I have expressed my opinion very fully in the Introductory Epistle to the *Fortunes of Nigel*, first edition; and, although it be composed in an imaginary character, it is as sincere and candid as if it had been written 'without my gown and band.'

In a word, when I considered myself as having been unsuccessful in the *Monastery*, I was tempted to try whether I could not restore, even at the risk of totally losing, my so-called reputation by a new hazard. I looked round my library, and could not but observe that, from the time of Chaucer to that of Byron, the most popular authors had been the most prolific. Even the aristarch Johnson allows that the quality of readiness and profusion had a merit in itself, independent of the intrinsic value of the composition. Talking of Churchill, I believe, who had little merit in his prejudiced eyes, he allowed him that of fertility, with some such qualification as this — 'A crab-apple can bear but crabs after all; but there is a great difference in favour of that which bears a large quantity of fruit, however indifferent, and that which produces only a few.'

Looking more attentively at the patriarchs of literature, whose career was as long as it was brilliant, I thought I perceived that in the busy and prolonged course of exertion there were no doubt occasional failures, but that still those who were favourites of their age triumphed over these mis-carriages. By the new efforts which they made, their errors were obliterated, they became identified with the literature of their country, and after having long received law from the critics, came in some degree to impose it. And when such a writer was at length called from the scene, his death first made the public sensible what a large share he had occupied in their attention. I recollected a passage in Grimm's *Correspondence*, that, while the unexhausted Voltaire sent forth tract after tract, to the very close of a long life, the first impression made by each as it appeared was that it was inferior to its predecessors — an opinion adopted from the general idea that the Patriarch of Ferney must at last find the point from which he was to decline. But the opinion of the public finally ranked in succession the last of Voltaire's *Essays* on the same footing with those which had formerly charmed the French nation. The inference from this and similar facts seemed to me to be that new works were often judged of by the public, not so much from their own intrinsic merit, as from extrinsic ideas which readers had previously formed with regard to them, and over which a writer might hope to triumph by patience and by exertion. There is a risk in the attempt :

If he fall in, good-night, or sink or swim.

But this is a chance incident to every literary attempt, and by which men of a sanguine temper are little moved.

I may illustrate what I mean by the feelings of most men in travelling. If we have found any stage particularly tedious or in an especial degree interesting, particularly short or much longer than we expected, our imaginations are so apt to exaggerate the original impression that, on repeating the journey, we usually find that we have considerably overrated the predominating quality, and the road appears to be duller or more pleasant, shorter or more tedious, than what we expected, and, consequently, than what is the actual case. It requires a third or fourth journey to enable us to form an accurate judgment of its beauty, its length, or its other attributes.

In the same manner, the public, judging of a new work, which it receives perhaps with little expectation, if surprised into applause, becomes very often ecstatic, gives a great deal more approbation than is due, and elevates the child of its immediate favour to a rank which, as it affects the author, it is equally difficult to keep and painful to lose. If, on this occasion, the author trembles at the height to which he is raised, and becomes afraid of the shadow of his own renown, he may indeed retire from the lottery with the prize which he has drawn, but, in future ages, his honour will be only in proportion to his labours. If, on the contrary, he rushes again into the lists, he is sure to be judged with severity proportioned to the former favour of the public. If he be daunted by a bad reception on this second occasion, he may again become a stranger to the arena. If, on the contrary, he can keep his ground, and stand the shuttlecock's fate, of being struck up and down, he will probably, at length, hold with some certainty the level in public opinion which he may be found to deserve; and he may perhaps boast of arresting the general attention, in the same manner as the Bachelor Samson Carrasco of fixing the weathercock La Giralda of Seville for weeks, months, or years, that is, for as long as the wind shall uniformly blow from one quarter. To this degree of popularity the Author had the hardihood to aspire, while, in order to attain it, he assumed the daring resolution to keep himself in the view of the public by frequent appearances before them.

It must be added, that the Author's incognito gave him the greater courage to renew his attempts to please the public, and an advantage similar to that which Jack the Giant-killer received from his coat of darkness. In sending the *Abbot* forth

so soon after the *Monastery*, he had used the well-known practice recommended by Bassanio :

In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot another of the self-same flight,
The self-same way, with more advised watch,
To find the other forth.

And, to continue the simile, his shafts, like those of the Lesser Ajax, were discharged more readily than the archer was as inaccessible to criticism, personally speaking, as the Grecian archer under his brother's sevenfold shield.

Should the reader desire to know upon what principles the *Abbot* was expected to amend the fortune of the *Monastery*, I have first to request his attention to the Introductory Epistle addressed to the imaginary Captain Clutterbuck — a mode by which, like his predecessors in this walk of fiction, the real Author makes one of his *dramatis persone* the means of communicating his own sentiments to the public, somewhat more artificially than by a direct address to the readers. A pleasing French writer of fairy tales, Monsieur Pajon, author of the *History of Prince Soly*, has set a diverting example of the same machinery, where he introduces the presiding Genius of the land of Romance conversing with one of the personages of the tale.

In this Introductory Epistle, the Author communicates, in confidence, to Captain Clutterbuck his sense that the White Lady had not met the taste of the times, and his reason for withdrawing her from the scene. The Author did not deem it equally necessary to be candid respecting another alteration. The *Monastery* was designed, at first, to have contained some supernatural agency, arising out of the fact that Melrose had been the place of deposit of the great Robert Bruce's heart. The writer shrunk, however, from filling up, in this particular, the sketch as it was originally traced ; nor did he venture to resume, in the continuation, the subject which he had left unattempted in the original work. Thus, the incident of the discovery of the heart, which occupies the greater part of the Introduction to the *Monastery*, is a mystery unnecessarily introduced, and which remains at last very imperfectly explained. In this particular, I was happy to shroud myself by the example of the author of *Caleb Williams*, who never condescends to inform us of the actual contents of that iron chest which makes such a figure in his interesting work, and gives the name to Mr. Colman's drama.

The public had some claim to inquire into this matter, but it seemed indifferent policy in the Author to give the explanation. For, whatever praise may be due to the ingenuity which brings to a general combination all the loose threads of a narrative, like the knitter at the finishing of her stocking, I am greatly deceived if in many cases a superior advantage is not attained by the air of reality which the deficiency of explanation attaches to a work written on a different system. In life itself, many things befall every mortal of which the individual never knows the real cause or origin; and were we to point out the most marked distinction between a real and a fictitious narrative, we would say, that the former, in reference to the remote causes of the events it relates, is obscure, doubtful, and mysterious; whereas, in the latter case, it is a part of the author's duty to afford satisfactory details upon the causes of the separate events he has recorded, and, in a word, to account for everything. The reader, like Mungo in the *Padlock*, will not be satisfied with hearing what he is not made fully to comprehend.

I omitted, therefore, in the Introduction to the *Abbot*, any attempt to explain the previous story or to apologise for unintelligibility.

Neither would it have been prudent to have endeavoured to proclaim, in the Introduction to the *Abbot*, the real spring by which I hoped it might attract a greater degree of interest than its immediate predecessor. A taking title, or the announcement of a popular subject, is a recipe for success much in favour with booksellers, but which authors will not always find efficacious. The cause is worth a moment's examination.

There occur in every country some peculiar historical characters, which are, like a spell or charm, sovereign to excite curiosity and attract attention, since every one in the slightest degree interested in the land which they belong to has heard much of them, and longs to hear more. A tale turning on the fortunes of Alfred or Elizabeth in England, or of Wallace or Bruce in Scotland, is sure by the very announcement to excite public curiosity to a considerable degree, and ensure the publisher's being relieved of the greater part of an impression, even before the contents of the work are known. This is of the last importance to the bookseller, who is at once, to use a technical phrase, 'brought home,' all his outlay being repaid. But it is a different case with the author, since it cannot be denied that we are apt to feel least satisfied with the works of

which we have been induced, by titles and laudatory advertisements, to entertain exaggerated expectations. The intention of the work has been anticipated, and misconceived or misrepresented, and although the difficulty of executing the work again reminds us of Hotspur's task of 'o'erwalking a current roaring loud,' yet the adventurer must look for more ridicule if he fails than applause if he executes his undertaking.

Notwithstanding a risk which should make authors pause ere they adopt a theme which, exciting general interest and curiosity, is often the preparative for disappointment, yet it would be an injudicious regulation which should deter the poet or painter from attempting to introduce historical portraits merely from the difficulty of executing the task in a satisfactory manner. Something must be trusted to the generous impulse, which often thrusts an artist upon feats of which he knows the difficulty, while he trusts courage and exertion may afford the means of surmounting it.

It is especially when he is sensible of losing ground with the public that an author may be justified in using with address such selection of subject or title as is most likely to procure a rehearing. It was with these feelings of hope and apprehension that I ventured to awaken, in a work of fiction, the memory of Queen Mary, so interesting by her wit, her beauty, her misfortunes, and the mystery which still does, and probably always will, overhang her history. In doing so, I was aware that failure would be a conclusive disaster, so that my task was something like that of an enchanter who raises a spirit over whom he is uncertain of possessing an effectual control; and I naturally paid attention to such principles of composition as I conceived were best suited to the historical novel.

Enough has been already said to explain the purpose of composing the *Abbot*. The historical references are, as usual, explained in the notes. That which relates to Queen Mary's escape from Lochleven Castle is a more minute account of that romantic adventure than is to be found in the histories of the period.

ABBOTSFORD, 1st January 1831.

INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE

FROM

THE AUTHOR OF *WAVERLEY*

TO

CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK

LATE OF HIS MAJESTY'S — REGIMENT OF INFANTRY

DEAR CAPTAIN —

I AM sorry to observe, by your last favour, that you disapprove of the numerous retrenchments and alterations which I have been under the necessity of making on the Manuscript of your friend, the Benedictine, and I willingly make you the medium of apology to many who have honoured me more than I deserve.

I admit that my retrenchments have been numerous, and leave gaps in the story, which, in your original manuscript, would have run wellnigh to a fourth volume, as my printer assures me. I am sensible, besides, that, in consequence of the liberty of curtailment you have allowed me, some parts of the story have been huddled up without the necessary details. But, after all, it is better that the travellers should have to step over a ditch than to wade through a morass: that the reader should have to suppose what may easily be inferred than be obliged to creep through pages of dull explanation. I have struck out, for example, the whole machinery of the White Lady, and the poetry by which it is so ably supported in the original manuscript. But you must allow that the public taste gives little encouragement to those legendary superstitions which formed alternately the delight and the terror of our predecessors. In like manner, much is omitted illustrative of the impulse of enthusiasm in favour of the ancient religion

in Mother Magdalen and the abbot. But we do not feel deep sympathy at this period with what was once the most powerful and animating principle in Europe, with the exception of that of the Reformation, by which it was successfully opposed.

You rightly observe that these retrenchments have rendered the title no longer applicable to the subject, and that some other would have been more suitable to the work in its present state than that of the abbot, who made so much greater figure in the original, and for whom your friend, the Benedictine, seems to have inspired you with a sympathetic respect. I must plead guilty to this accusation, observing, at the same time, in manner of extenuation, that though the objection might have been easily removed by giving a new title to the work, yet, in doing so, I should have destroyed the necessary cohesion between the present history and its predecessor the *Monastery*, which I was unwilling to do, as the period and several of the personages were the same.

After all, my good friend, it is of little consequence what the work is called, or on what interest it turns, provided it catches the public attention; for the quality of the wine, could we but ensure it, may, according to the old proverb, render the bush unnecessary or of little consequence.

I congratulate you upon your having found it consistent with prudence to establish your tilbury, and approve of the colour, and of your boy's livery (subdued green and pink). As you talk of completing your descriptive poem on the *Ruins of Kennaquhar. with Notes by an Antiquary*, I hope you have procured a steady horse.

I remain, with compliments to all friends, dear Captain, very much

Yours, etc. etc. etc.,

THE AUTHOR OF *WAVERLEY*.

THE ABBOT

A SEQUEL TO THE MONASTERY

CHAPTER I

Domum mansit, lanam fecit.

ANCIENT ROMAN EPITAPH.

She keepit close the hous, and birlit at the quhele.

GAWAIN DOUGLAS.

THE time which passes over our heads so imperceptibly makes the same gradual change in habits, manners, and character as in personal appearance. At the revolution of every five years we find ourselves another, and yet the same : there is a change of views, and no less of the light in which we regard them, a change of motives as well as of actions. Nearly twice that space had glided away over the head of Halbert Glendinning and his lady betwixt the period of our former narrative, in which they played a distinguished part, and the date at which our present tale commences.

Two circumstances only had embittered their union, which was otherwise as happy as mutual affection could render it. The first of these was indeed the common calamity of Scotland, being the distracted state of that unhappy country, where every man's sword was directed against his neighbour's bosom. Glendinning had proved what Murray expected of him, a steady friend, strong in battle and wise in council, adhering to him, from motives of gratitude, in situations where by his own unbiassed will he would either have stood neuter or have joined the opposite party. Hence, when danger was near — and it was seldom far distant — Sir Halbert Glendinning, for he now bore the rank of knighthood, was perpetually summoned to attend his patron on distant expeditions, or on perilous enterprises, or to assist him with his counsel in the doubtful intrigues of a half-barbarous court. He was thus frequently, and for a long

space, absent from his castle and from his lady ; and to this ground of regret we must add, that their union had not been blessed with children, to occupy the attention of the Lady of Avenel while she was thus deprived of her husband's domestic society.

On such occasions she lived almost entirely secluded from the world, within the walls of her paternal mansion. Visiting amongst neighbours was a matter entirely out of the question, unless on occasions of solemn festival, and then it was chiefly confined to near kindred. Of these the Lady of Avenel had none who survived, and the dames of the neighbouring barons affected to regard her less as the heiress of the house of Avenel than as the wife of a peasant, the son of a church-vassal, raised up to mushroom eminence by the capricious favour of Murray.

The pride of ancestry, which rankled in the bosom of the ancient gentry, was more openly expressed by their ladies, and was, moreover, embittered not a little by the political feuds of the time, for most of the Southron chiefs were friends to the authority of the Queen, and very jealous of the power of Murray. The Castle of Avenel was, therefore, on all these accounts, as melancholy and solitary a residence for its lady as could well be imagined. Still it had the essential recommendation of great security. The reader is already aware that the fortress was built upon an islet on a small lake, and was only accessible by a causeway, intersected by a double ditch, defended by two drawbridges, so that, without artillery, it might in those days be considered as impregnable. It was only necessary, therefore, to secure against surprise, and the service of six able men within the castle was sufficient for that purpose. If more serious danger threatened, an ample garrison was supplied by the male inhabitants of a little hamlet which, under the auspices of Halbert Glendinning, had arisen on a small piece of level ground, betwixt the lake and the hill, nearly adjoining to the spot where the causeway joined the mainland. The Lord of Avenel had found it an easy matter to procure inhabitants, as he was not only a kind and beneficent over-lord, but well qualified, both by his experience in arms, his high character for wisdom and integrity, and his favour with the powerful Earl of Murray, to protect and defend those who dwelt under his banner. In leaving his castle for any length of time, he had, therefore, the consolation to reflect that this village afforded, on the slightest notice, a band of thirty stout

men, which was more than sufficient for its defence ; while the families of the villagers, as was usual on such occasions, fled to the recesses of the mountains, drove their cattle to the same places of shelter, and left the enemy to work their will on their miserable cottages.

One guest only resided generally, if not constantly, at the Castle of Avenel. This was Henry Warden, who now felt himself less able for the stormy task imposed on the Reforming clergy ; and having by his zeal given personal offence to many of the leading nobles and chiefs, did not consider himself as perfectly safe unless when within the walls of the strong mansion of some assured friend. He ceased not, however, to serve his cause as eagerly with his pen as he had formerly done with his tongue, and had engaged in a furious and acrimonious contest concerning the sacrifice of the mass, as it was termed, with the Abbot Eustatius, formerly the sub-prior of Kennaquhair. Answers, replies, duplies, triplies, quadruples followed thick upon each other, and displayed, as is not unusual in controversy, fully as much zeal as Christian charity. The disputation very soon became as celebrated as that of John Knox and the Abbot of Crossraguel, raged nearly as fiercely, and, for aught I know, the publications to which it gave rise may be as precious in the eyes of bibliographers.¹ But the engrossing nature of his occupation rendered the theologian not the most interesting companion for a solitary female ; and his grave, stern, and absorbed deportment, which seldom showed any interest except in that which concerned his religious profession, made his presence rather add to than diminish the gloom which hung over the Castle of Avenel. To superintend the tasks of numerous female domestics was the principal part of the lady's daily employment ; her spindle and distaff, her Bible, and a solitary walk upon the battlements of the castle, or upon the causeway, or occasionally, but more seldom, upon the banks of the little lake, consumed the rest of the day. But so great was the insecurity of the period that, when she ventured to extend her walk beyond the hamlet, the warder on the watch-tower was directed to keep a sharp look-out in every direction, and four or five men held themselves in readiness to mount and sally forth from the castle on the slightest appearance of alarm.

¹ The tracts which appeared in the disputation between the Scottish Reformer and Quentin Kennedy, Abbot of Crossraguel, are among the scarcest in Scottish bibliography. See *McCrie's Life of Knox*, p. 258.

Thus stood affairs at the castle, when, after an absence of several weeks, the Knight of Avenel, which was now the title most frequently given to Sir Halbert Glendinning, was daily expected to return home. Day after day, however, passed away, and he returned not. Letters in those days were rarely written, and the knight must have resorted to a secretary to express his intentions in that manner; besides, intercourse of all kinds was precarious and unsafe, and no man cared to give any public intimation of the time and direction of a journey, since, if his route were publicly known, it was always likely he might in that case meet with more enemies than friends upon the road. The precise day, therefore, of Sir Halbert's return was not fixed, but that which his lady's fond expectation had calculated upon in her own mind had long since passed, and hope delayed began to make the heart sick.

It was upon the evening of a sultry summer's day, when the sun was half-sunk behind the distant western mountains of Liddesdale, that the lady took her solitary walk on the battlements of a range of buildings, which formed the front of the castle, where a flat roof of flagstones presented a broad and convenient promenade. The level surface of the lake, undisturbed except by the occasional dipping of a teal-duck or coot, was gilded with the beams of the setting luminary, and reflected, as if in a golden mirror, the hills amongst which it lay embosomed. The scene, otherwise so lonely, was occasionally enlivened by the voices of the children in the village, which, softened by distance, reached the ear of the lady in her solitary walk, or by the distant call of the herdsman, as he guided his cattle from the glen in which they had pastured all day, to place them in greater security for the night, in the immediate vicinity of the village. The deep lowing of the cows seemed to demand the attendance of the milk-maidens, who, singing shrilly and merrily, strolled forth, each with her pail on her head, to attend to the duty of the evening. The Lady of Avenel looked and listened; the sounds which she heard reminded her of former days, when her most important employment, as well as her greatest delight, was to assist Dame Glendinning and Tibb Tacket in milking the cows at Glendearg. The thought was fraught with melancholy.

'Why was I not,' she said, 'the peasant girl which in all men's eyes I seemed to be! Halbert and I had then spent our life peacefully in his native glen, undisturbed by the phantoms either of fear or of ambition. His greatest pride had then been

to show the fairest herd in the halidome ; his greatest danger to repel some pilfering snatcher from the Border ; and the utmost distance which would have divided us would have been the chase of some out-lying deer. But, alas ! what avails the blood which Halbert has shed, and the dangers which he encounters, to support a name and rank, dear to him because he has it from me, but which we shall never transmit to our posterity ? With me the name of Avenel must expire.'

She sighed as these reflections arose, and, looking towards the shore of the lake, her eye was attracted by a group of children of various ages, assembled to see a little ship, constructed by some village artist, perform its first voyage on the water. It was launched amid the shouts of tiny voices and the clapping of little hands, and shot bravely forth on its voyage with a favouring wind, which promised to carry it to the other side of the lake. Some of the bigger boys ran round to receive and secure it on the farther shore, trying their speed against each other as they sprang like young fawns along the shingly verge of the lake. The rest, for whom such a journey seemed too arduous, remained watching the motions of the fairy vessel from the spot where it had been launched. The sight of their sports pressed on the mind of the childless Lady of Avenel.

'Why are none of these prattlers mine ?' she continued, pursuing the tenor of her melancholy reflections. 'Their parents can scarce find them the coarsest food ; and I, who could nurse them in plenty—I am doomed never to hear a child call me mother !'

The thought sunk on her heart with a bitterness which resembled envy, so deeply is the desire of offspring implanted in the female breast. She pressed her hands together as if she were wringing them in the extremity of her desolate feeling, as one whom Heaven had written childless. A large staghound of the greyhound species approached at this moment, and, attracted perhaps by the gesture, licked her hands and pressed his large head against them. He obtained the desired caress in return, but still the sad impression remained.

'Wolf,' she said, as if the animal could have understood her complaints, 'thou art a noble and beautiful animal ; but, alas ! the love and affection that I long to bestow is of a quality higher than can fall to thy share, though I love thee much.'

And, as if she were apologising to Wolf for withholding from him any part of her regard, she caressed his proud head and crest, while, looking in her eyes, he seemed to ask her

what she wanted, or what he could do to show his attachment. At this moment a shriek of distress was heard on the shore, from the playful group which had been lately so jovial. The lady looked, and saw the cause with great agony.

The little ship, the object of the children's delighted attention, had stuck among some tufts of the plant which bears the water-lily, that marked a shoal in the lake about an arrow-flight from the shore. A hardy little boy, who had taken the lead in the race round the margin of the lake, did not hesitate a moment to strip off his 'wylie-coat,' plunge into the water, and swim towards the object of their common solicitude. The first movement of the lady was to call for help; but she observed that the boy swam strongly and fearlessly, and as she saw that one or two villagers, who were distant spectators of the incident, seemed to give themselves no uneasiness on his account, she supposed that he was accustomed to the exercise, and that there was no danger. But whether, in swimming, the boy had struck his breast against a sunken rock, or whether he was suddenly taken with cramp, or whether he had over-calculated his own strength, it so happened that, when he had disembarrassed the little plaything from the flags in which it was entangled, and sent it forward on its course, he had scarce swam a few yards in his way to the shore, when he raised himself suddenly from the water and screamed aloud, clapping his hands at the same time with an expression of fear and pain.

The Lady of Avenel, instantly taking the alarm, called hastily to the attendants to get the boat ready. But this was an affair of some time. The only boat permitted to be used on the lake was moored within the second cut which intersected the canal, and it was several minutes ere it could be unmoored and got under way. Meantime, the Lady of Avenel, with agonising anxiety, saw that the efforts that the poor boy made to keep himself afloat were now exchanged for a faint struggling, which would soon have been over, but for aid equally prompt and unhopèd-for. Wolf, who, like some of that large species of greyhound, was a practised water-dog, had marked the object of her anxiety, and, quitting his mistress's side, had sought the nearest point from which he could with safety plunge into the lake. With the wonderful instinct which these noble animals have so often displayed in the like circumstances, he swam straight to the spot where his assistance was so much wanted, and seizing the child's under-dress in his mouth, he not only kept him afloat, but towed him towards the causeway.

The boat, having put off with a couple of men, met the dog half-way, and relieved him of his burden. They landed on the causeway, close by the gates of the castle, with their yet lifeless charge, and were there met by the Lady of Avenel, attended by one or two of her maidens, eagerly waiting to administer assistance to the sufferer.

He was borne into the castle, deposited upon a bed, and every mode of recovery resorted to which the knowledge of the times, and the skill of Henry Warden, who professed some medical science, could dictate. For some time it was all in vain, and the lady watched with unspeakable earnestness the pallid countenance of the beautiful child. He seemed about ten years old. His dress was of the meanest sort; but his long curled hair, and the noble cast of his features, partook not of that poverty of appearance. The proudest noble in Scotland might have been yet prouder could he have called that child his heir. While, with breathless anxiety, the Lady of Avenel gazed on his well-formed and expressive features, a slight shade of colour returned gradually to the cheek; suspended animation became restored by degrees, the child sighed deeply, opened his eyes, which to the human countenance produces the effect of light upon the natural landscape, stretched his arms towards the lady, and muttered the word 'Mother' — that epithet of all others which is dearest to the female ear.

'God, madam,' said the preacher, 'has restored the child to your wishes; it must be yours so to bring him up that he may not one day wish that he had perished in his innocence.'

'It shall be my charge,' said the lady; and again throwing her arms around the boy, she overwhelmed him with kisses and caresses, so much was she agitated by the terror arising from the danger in which he had been just placed, and by joy at his unexpected deliverance.

'But you are not my mother,' said the boy, recovering his recollection, and endeavouring, though faintly, to escape from the caresses of the Lady of Avenel — 'you are not my mother. Alas! I have no mother — only I have dreamt that I had one.'

'I will read the dream for you, my love,' answered the Lady of Avenel; 'and I will be myself your mother. Surely God has heard my wishes, and in His own marvellous manner hath sent me an object on which my affections may expand themselves.' She looked towards Warden as she spoke. The preacher hesitated what he should reply to a burst of passionate feeling which, perhaps, seemed to him more enthusiastic than the occa-

sion demanded. In the meanwhile, the large staghound, Wolf, which, dripping wet as he was, had followed his mistress into the apartment, and had sat by the bedside, a patient and quiet spectator of all the means used for resuscitation of the being whom he had preserved, now became impatient of remaining any longer unnoticed, and began to whine and fawn upon the lady with his great rough paws.

'Yes,' she said, 'good Wolf, and you shall be remembered also for your day's work; and I will think the more of you for having preserved the life of a creature so beautiful.'

But Wolf was not quite satisfied with the share of attention which he thus attracted: he persisted in whining and pawing upon his mistress, his caresses rendered still more troublesome by his long shaggy hair being so much and thoroughly wetted, till she desired one of the domestics, with whom he was familiar, to call the animal out of the apartment. Wolf resisted every invitation to this purpose, until his mistress positively commanded him to be gone, in an angry tone; when, turning towards the bed on which the boy still lay, half-awake to sensation, half-drowned in the meanders of fluctuating delirium, he uttered a deep and savage growl, curled up his nose and lips, showing his full range of white and sharpened teeth, which might have matched those of an actual wolf, and then, turning round, sullenly followed the domestic out of the apartment.

'It is singular,' said the lady, addressing Warden; 'the animal is not only so good-natured to all, but so particularly fond of children. What can ail him at the little fellow whose life he has saved?'

'Dogs,' replied the preacher, 'are but too like the human race in their foibles, though their instinct be less erring than the reason of poor mortal man when relying upon his own unassisted powers. Jealousy, my good lady, is a passion not unknown to them, and they often evince it, not only with respect to the preferences which they see given by their masters to individuals of their own species, but even when their rivals are children. You have caressed that child much and eagerly, and the dog considers himself as a discarded favourite.'

'It is a strange instinct,' said the lady; 'and from the gravity with which you mention it, my reverend friend, I would almost say that you supposed this singular jealousy of my favourite, Wolf, was not only well founded but justifiable. But perhaps you speak in jest?'

'I seldom jest,' answered the preacher; 'life was not lent to us to be expended in that idle mirth which resembles the crackling of thorns under the pot. I would only have you derive, if it so please you, this lesson from what I have said, that the best of our feelings, when indulged to excess, may give pain to others. There is but one in which we may indulge to the utmost limit of vehemence of which our bosom is capable, secure that excess cannot exist in the greatest intensity to which it can be excited: I mean the love of our Maker.'

'Surely,' said the Lady of Avenel, 'we are commanded by the same authority to love our neighbour!'

'Ay, madam,' said Warden, 'but our love to God is to be unbounded; we are to love Him with our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole strength. The love which the precept commands us to bear to our neighbour has affixed to it a direct limit and qualification: we are to love our neighbour as ourself; as it is elsewhere explained by the great commandment, that we must do unto him as we would that he should do unto us. Here there is a limit and a bound even to the most praiseworthy of our affections, so far as they are turned upon sublunary and terrestrial objects. We are to render to our neighbour, whatever be his rank or degree, that corresponding portion of affection with which we could rationally expect we should ourselves be regarded by those standing in the same relation to us. Hence, neither husband nor wife, neither son nor daughter, neither friend nor relation, are lawfully to be made the objects of our idolatry. The Lord our God is a jealous God, and will not endure that we bestow on the creature that extremity of devotion which He who made us demands as His own share. I say to you, lady, that even in the fairest and purest and most honourable feelings of our nature there is that original taint of sin which ought to make us pause and hesitate ere we indulge them to excess.'

'I understand not this, reverend sir,' said the lady; 'nor do I guess what I can have now said or done to draw down on me an admonition which has something a taste of reproof.'

'Lady,' said Warden, 'I crave your pardon if I have urged aught beyond the limits of my duty. But consider whether, in the sacred promise to be not only a protectress but a mother to this poor child, your purpose may meet the wishes of the noble knight your husband. The fondness which you have lavished on the unfortunate, and, I own, most lovely, child has met something like a reproof in the bearing of your household

dog. Displease not your noble husband. Men, as well as animals, are jealous of the affections of those they love.'

'This is too much, reverend sir,' said the Lady of Avenel, greatly offended. 'You have been long our guest, and have received from the Knight of Avenel and myself that honour and regard which your character and profession so justly demand. But I am yet to learn that we have at any time authorised your interference in our family arrangements, or placed you as a judge of our conduct towards each other. I pray this may be forborne in future.'

'Lady,' replied the preacher, with the boldness peculiar to the clergy of his persuasion at that time, 'when you weary of my admonitions, when I see that my services are no longer acceptable to you and the noble knight your husband, I shall know that my Master wills me no longer to abide here; and, praying for a continuance of His best blessings on your family, I will then, were the season the depth of winter, and the hour midnight, walk out on yonder waste, and travel forth through these wild mountains, as lonely and unaided, though far more helpless, than when I first met your husband in the valley of Glendearg. But while I remain here, I will not see you err from the true path, no, not a hair's-breadth, without making the old man's voice and remonstrance heard.'

'Nay, but,' said the lady, who both loved and respected the good man, though sometimes a little offended at what she conceived to be an exuberant degree of zeal, 'we will not part this way, my good friend. Women are quick and hasty in their feelings; but, believe me, my wishes and my purposes towards this child are such as both my husband and you will approve of.'

The clergyman bowed, and retreated to his own apartment.

CHAPTER II

How steadfastly he fix'd his eyes on me —
His dark eyes shining through forgotten tears —
Then stretch'd his little arms, and call'd me mother !
What could I do ? I took the bantling home ;
I could not tell the imp he had no mother.

Count Basil.

WHEN Warden had left the apartment, the Lady of Avenel gave way to the feelings of tenderness which the sight of the boy, his sudden danger, and his recent escape had inspired ; and no longer awed by the sternness, as she deemed it, of the preacher, heaped with caresses the lovely and interesting child. He was now in some measure recovered from the consequences of his accident, and received passively, though not without wonder, the tokens of kindness with which he was thus loaded. The face of the lady was strange to him, and her dress different and far more sumptuous than any he remembered. But the boy was naturally of an undaunted temper ; and indeed children are generally acute physiognomists, and not only pleased by that which is beautiful in itself, but peculiarly quick in distinguishing and replying to the attentions of those who really love them. If they see a person in company, though a perfect stranger, who is by nature fond of children, the little imps seem to discover it by a sort of freemasonry, while the awkward attempts of those who make advances to them for the purpose of recommending themselves to the parents usually fail in attracting their reciprocal attention. The little boy, therefore, appeared in some degree sensible of the lady's caresses, and it was with difficulty she withdrew herself from his pillow to afford him leisure for necessary repose.

'To whom belongs our little rescued varlet ?' was the first question which the Lady of Avenel put to her handmaiden Lilius, when they had retired to the hall.

'To an old woman in the hamlet,' said Lilius, 'who is even

now come so far as the porter's lodge to inquire concerning his safety. Is it your pleasure that she be admitted ?

'Is it my pleasure !' said the Lady of Avenel, echoing the question with a strong accent of displeasure and surprise ; 'can you make any doubt of it ? What woman but must pity the agony of the mother whose heart is throbbing for the safety of a child so lovely !'

'Nay, but, madam,' said Lilius, 'this woman is too old to be the mother of the child ; I rather think she must be his grandmother, or some more distant relation.'

'Be she who she will, Lilius,' replied the lady, 'she must have an aching heart while the safety of a creature so lovely is uncertain. Go instantly and bring her hither. Besides, I would willingly learn something concerning his birth.'

Lilius left the hall, and presently afterwards returned, bringing in a tall female very poorly dressed, yet with more attention to decency and cleanliness than was usually combined with such coarse garments. The Lady of Avenel knew her figure the instant she presented herself. It was the fashion of the family that, upon every Sabbath, and on two evenings in the week besides, Henry Warden preached or lectured in the chapel at the castle. The extension of the Protestant faith was, upon principle, as well as in good policy, a primary object with the Knight of Avenel. The inhabitants of the village were therefore invited to attend upon the instructions of Henry Warden, and many of them were speedily won to the doctrine which their master and protector approved. These sermons, homilies, and lectures had made a great impression on the mind of the Abbot Eustace, or Eustatius, and were a sufficient spur to the severity and sharpness of his controversy with his old fellow-collegiate ; and, ere Queen Mary was dethroned, and while the Catholics still had considerable authority in the Border provinces, he more than once threatened to levy his vassals, and assail and level with the earth that stronghold of heresy, the Castle of Avenel. But notwithstanding the abbot's impotent resentment, and notwithstanding also the disinclination of the country to favour the new religion, Henry Warden proceeded without remission in his labours, and made weekly converts from the faith of Rome to that of the Reformed church. Amongst those who gave most earnest and constant attendance on his ministry was the aged woman, whose form, tall, and otherwise too remarkable to be forgotten, the lady had of late observed frequently as being conspicuous amongst the little

audience. She had indeed more than once desired to know who that stately-looking woman was, whose appearance was so much above the poverty of her vestments. But the reply had always been that she was an Englishwoman, who was tarrying for a season at the hamlet, and that no one knew more concerning her. She now asked her after her name and birth.

'Magdalen Græme is my name,' said the woman; 'I come of the Græmes of Heathergill, in Nicol Forest,¹ a people of ancient blood.'

'And what make you,' continued the lady, 'so far distant from your home?'

'I have no home,' said Magdalen Græme: 'it was burnt by your Border riders; my husband and my son were slain; there is not a drop's blood left in the veins of any one which is of kin to mine.'

'That is no uncommon fate in these wild times, and in this unsettled land,' said the lady; 'the English hands have been as deeply dyed in our blood as ever those of Scotsmen have been in yours.'

'You have right to say it, lady,' answered Magdalen Græme; 'for men tell of a time when this castle was not strong enough to save your father's life, or to afford your mother and her infant a place of refuge. And why ask ye me, then, wherefore I dwell not in mine own home, and with mine own people?'

'It was indeed an idle question,' answered the lady, 'where misery so often makes wanderers; but wherefore take refuge in a hostile country?'

'My neighbours were Popish and mass-mongers,' said the old woman; 'it has pleased Heaven to give me a clearer sight of the Gospel, and I have tarried here to enjoy the ministry of that worthy man Henry Warden, who, to the praise and comfort of many, teacheth the Evangel in truth and in sincerity.'

'Are you poor?' again demanded the Lady of Avenel.

'You hear me ask alms of no one,' answered the Englishwoman.

Here there was a pause. The manner of the woman was, if not disrespectful, at least much less than gracious; and she appeared to give no encouragement to farther communication. The Lady of Avenel renewed the conversation on a different topic.

'You have heard of the danger in which your boy has been placed?'

¹ A district of Cumberland, lying close to the Scottish Border.

'I have, lady, and how by an especial providence he was rescued from death. May Heaven make him thankful, and me!'

'What relation do you bear to him?'

'I am his grandmother, lady, if it so please you; the only relation he hath left upon earth to take charge of him.'

'The burden of his maintenance must necessarily be grievous to you in your deserted situation?' pursued the lady.

'I have complained of it to no one,' said Magdalen Græme, with the same unmoved, dry, and unconcerned tone of voice in which she had answered all the former questions.

'If,' said the Lady of Avenel, 'your grandchild could be received into a noble family, would it not advantage both him and you?'

'Received into a noble family!' said the old woman, drawing herself up, and bending her brows until her forehead was wrinkled into a frown of unusual severity; 'and for what purpose, I pray you? — to be my lady's page, or my lord's jack-man, to eat broken victuals, and contend with other menials for the remnants of the master's meal? Would you have him to fan the flies from my lady's face while she sleeps, to carry her train while she walks, to hand her trencher when she feeds, to ride before her on horseback, to walk after her on foot, to sing when she lists, and to be silent when she bids? — a very weathercock, which, though furnished in appearance with wings and plumage, cannot soar into the air — cannot fly from the spot where it is perched, but receives all its impulses, and performs all its revolutions, obedient to the changeable breath of a vain woman? When the eagle of Helvellyn perches on the tower of Lanercost, and turns and changes his place to show how the wind sits, Roland Græme shall be what you would make him.'

The woman spoke with a rapidity and vehemence which seemed to have in it a touch of insanity; and a sudden sense of the danger to which the child must necessarily be exposed in the charge of such a keeper increased the lady's desire to keep him in the castle, if possible.

'You mistake me, dame,' she said, addressing the old woman in a soothing manner; 'I do not wish your boy to be in attendance on myself, but upon the good knight, my husband. Were he himself the son of a belted earl, he could not better be trained to arms, and all that befits a gentleman, than by the instructions and discipline of Sir Halbert Glendinning.'

'Ay,' answered the old woman, in the same style of bitter irony, 'I know the wages of that service — a curse when the

corslet is not sufficiently brightened, a blow when the girth is not tightly drawn; to be beaten because the hounds are at fault; to be reviled because the foray is unsuccessful; to stain his hands for the master's bidding in the blood alike of beast and of man; to be a butcher of harmless deer, a murderer and defacer of God's own image, not at his own pleasure, but at that of his lord; to live a brawling ruffian, and a common stabber — exposed to heat, to cold, to want of food, to all the privations of an anchorite, not for the love of God, but for the service of Satan; to die by the gibbet, or in some obscure skirmish; to sleep out his brief life in carnal security, and to awake in the eternal fire which is never quenched.'

'Nay,' said the Lady of Avenel, 'but to such unhallowed course of life your grandson will not be here exposed. My husband is just and kind to those who live under his banner; and you yourself well know that youth have here a strict as well as a good preceptor in the person of our chaplain.'

The old woman appeared to pause.

'You have named,' she said, 'the only circumstance which can move me. I must soon onward, the vision has said it: I must not tarry in the same spot — I must on — I must on, it is my weird. Swear, then, that you will protect the boy as if he were your own, until I return hither and claim him, and I will consent for a space to part with him. But especially swear, he shall not lack the instruction of the godly man who hath placed the Gospel truth high above those idolatrous shavelings, the monks and friars.'

'Be satisfied, dame,' said the Lady of Avenel; 'the boy shall have as much care as if he were born of my own blood. Will you see him now?'

'No,' answered the old woman, sternly; 'to part is enough. I go forth on my own mission. I will not soften my heart by useless tears and wailings, as one that is not called to a duty.'

'Will you not accept of something to aid you in your pilgrimage?' said the Lady of Avenel, putting into her hand two crowns of the sun. The old woman flung them down on the table.

'Am I of the race of Cain,' she said, 'proud lady, that you offer me gold in exchange for my own flesh and blood?'

'I had no such meaning,' said the lady, gently; 'nor am I the proud woman you term me. Alas! my own fortunes might have taught me humility, even had it not been born with me.'

The old woman seemed somewhat to relax her tone of severity.

'You are of gentle blood,' she said, 'else we had not parleyed thus long together. You are of gentle blood, and to such,' she added, drawing up her tall form as she spoke, 'pride is as graceful as is the plume upon the bonnet. But for these pieces of gold, lady, you must needs resume them. I need not money. I am well provided; and I may not care for myself, nor think how, or by whom, I shall be sustained. Farewell, and keep your word. Cause your gates to be opened and your bridges to be lowered. I will set forward this very night. When I come again I will demand from you a strict account, for I have left with you the jewel of my life! Sleep will visit me but in snatches, food will not refresh me, rest will not restore my strength, until I see Roland Græme. Once more, farewell.'

'Make your obeisance, dame,' said Lilius to Magdalen Græme, as she retired — 'make your obeisance to her ladyship, and thank her for her goodness, as is but fitting and right.'

The old woman turned short round on the officious waiting-maid. 'Let her make her obeisance to me then, and I will return it. Why should I bend to her? — is it because her kirtle is of silk, and mine of blue lockram? Go to, my lady's waiting-woman. Know that the rank of the man rates that of the wife, and that she who marries a churl's son, were she a king's daughter, is but a peasant's bride.'

Lilius was about to reply in great indignation, but her mistress imposed silence on her, and commanded that the old woman should be safely conducted to the mainland.

'Conduct her safe!' exclaimed the incensed waiting-woman, while Magdalen Græme left the apartment; 'I say, duck her in the loch, and then we will see whether she is witch or not, as everybody in the village of Lochside will say and swear. I marvel your ladyship could bear so long with her insolence.'

But the commands of the lady were obeyed, and the old dame, dismissed from the castle, was committed to her fortune. She kept her word, and did not long abide in that place, leaving the hamlet on the very night succeeding the interview, and wandering no one asked whither. The Lady of Avenel inquired under what circumstances she had appeared among them, but could only learn that she was believed to be the widow of some man of consequence among the Græmes who then inhabited the Debateable Land, a name given to a certain portion of territory which was the frequent subject of dispute betwixt Scotland and England; that she had suffered great wrong in some of the frequent forays by which that unfortunate district was wasted,

and had been driven from her dwelling-place. She had arrived in the hamlet no one knew for what purpose, and was held by some to be a witch, by others a zealous Protestant, and by others again a Catholic devotee. Her language was mysterious, and her manners repulsive; and all that could be collected from her conversation seemed to imply that she was under the influence either of a spell or of a vow — there was no saying which, since she talked as one who acted under a powerful and external agency.

Such were the particulars which the lady's inquiries were able to collect concerning Magdalen Græme, being far too meagre and contradictory to authorise any satisfactory deduction. In truth, the miseries of the time, and the various turns of fate incidental to a frontier country, were perpetually chasing from their habitations those who had not the means of defence or protection. These wanderers in the land were too often seen to excite much attention or sympathy. They received the cold relief which was extorted by general feelings of humanity; a little excited in some breasts, and perhaps rather chilled in others, by the recollection that they who gave the charity to-day might themselves want it to-morrow. Magdalen Græme, therefore, came and departed like a shadow from the neighbourhood of Avenel Castle.

The boy whom Providence, as she thought, had thus strangely placed under her care, was at once established a favourite with the lady of the castle. How could it be otherwise? He became the object of those affectionate feelings which, finding formerly no object on which to expand themselves, had increased the gloom of the castle, and embittered the solitude of its mistress. To teach him reading and writing as far as her skill went, to attend to his childish comforts, to watch his boyish sports, became the lady's favourite amusement. In her circumstances, where the ear only heard the lowing of the cattle from the distant hills, or the heavy step of the warder as he walked upon his post, or the half-envied laugh of her maiden as she turned her wheel, the appearance of the blooming and beautiful boy gave an interest which can hardly be conceived by those who live amid gayer or busier scenes. Young Roland was to the Lady of Avenel what the flower which occupies the window of some solitary captive is to the poor wight by whom it is nursed and cultivated — something which at once excited and repaid her care; and in giving the boy her affection, she felt, as it were, grateful to him for releasing her from the state of dull

apathy in which she had usually found herself during the absence of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

But even the charms of this blooming favourite were unable to chase the recurring apprehensions which arose from her husband's procrastinated return. Soon after Roland Graeme became a resident at the castle, a groom, despatched by Sir Halbert, brought tidings that business still delayed the knight at the court of Holyrood. The more distant period which the messenger had assigned for his master's arrival at length glided away, summer melted into autumn, and autumn was about to give place to winter, and yet he came not.

CHAPTER III

The waning harvest-moon shone broad and bright,
The warder's horn was heard at dead of night,
And while the folding portals wide were flung,
With trampling hoofs the rocky pavement rung.

LEYDEN.

'AND you, too, would be a soldier, Roland?' said the Lady of Avenel to her young charge, while, seated on a stone chair at one end of the battlements, she saw the boy attempt with a long stick to mimic the motions of the warder as he alternately shouldered, or ported, or sloped pike.

'Yes, lady,' said the boy, for he was now familiar, and replied to her questions with readiness and alacrity — 'a soldier will I be; for there ne'er was gentleman but who belted him with the brand.'

'Thou a gentleman!' said Liliass, who, as usual, was in attendance; 'such a gentleman as I would make of a bearded with a rusty knife.'

'Nay, chide him not, Liliass,' said the Lady of Avenel, 'for, beshrew me, but I think he comes of gentle blood; see how it musters in his face at your injurious reproof.'

'Had I my will, madam,' answered Liliass, 'a good birchen wand should make his colour muster to better purpose still.'

'On my word, Liliass,' said the lady, 'one would think you had received harm from the poor boy; or is he so far on the frosty side of your favour because he enjoys the sunny side of mine?'

'Over Heaven's forbode, my lady!' answered Liliass; 'I have lived too long with gentles, I praise my stars for it, to fight with either follies or fantasies, whether they relate to beast, bird, or boy.'

Liliass was a favourite in her own class, a spoiled domestic, and often accustomed to take more license than her mistress was at all times willing to encourage. But what did not please

the Lady of Avenel she did not choose to hear, and thus it was on the present occasion. She resolved to look more close and sharply after the boy, who had hitherto been committed chiefly to the management of Lillas. He must, she thought, be born of gentle blood ; it were shame to think otherwise of a form so noble and features so fair ; the very wildness in which he occasionally indulged, his contempt of danger and impatience of restraint, had in them something noble : assuredly the child was born of high rank. Such was her conclusion, and she acted upon it accordingly. The domestics around her, less jealous or less scrupulous than Lillas, acted as servants usually do, following the bias, and flattering, for their own purposes, the humour, of the lady ; and the boy soon took on him those airs of superiority which the sight of habitual deference seldom fails to inspire. It seemed, in truth, as if to command were his natural sphere, so easily did he use himself to exact and receive compliance with his humours. The chaplain, indeed, might have interposed to check the air of assumption which Roland Græme so readily indulged, and most probably would have willingly rendered him that favour ; but the necessity of adjusting with his brethren some disputed points of church discipline had withdrawn him for some time from the castle, and detained him in a distant part of the kingdom.

Matters stood thus in the Castle of Avenel, when a winded bugle sent its shrill and prolonged notes from the shore of the lake, and was replied to cheerily by the signal of the warder. The Lady of Avenel knew the sounds of her husband, and rushed to the window of the apartment in which she was sitting. A band of about thirty spearmen, with a pennon displayed before them, winded along the indented shores of the lake, and approached the causeway. A single horseman rode at the head of the party, his bright arms catching a glance of the October sun as he moved steadily along. Even at that distance, the lady recognised the lofty plume, bearing the mingled colours of her own liveries and those of Glendonwyne, blended with the holly-branch ; and the firm seat and dignified demeanour of the rider, joined to the stately motion of the dark-brown steed, sufficiently announced Halbert Glendinning.

The lady's first thought was that of rapturous joy at her husband's return ; her second was connected with a fear which had sometimes intruded itself, that he might not altogether approve the peculiar distinction with which she had treated her orphan ward. In this fear there was implied a consciousness

that the favour she had shown him was excessive; for Halbert Glendinning was at least as gentle and indulgent as he was firm and rational in the intercourse of his household; and to her, in particular, his conduct had ever been most affectionately tender.

Yet she did fear that, on the present occasion, her conduct might incur Sir Halbert's censure; and hastily resolving that she would not mention the anecdote of the boy until the next day, she ordered him to be withdrawn from the apartment by Lilius.

'I will not go with Lilius, madam,' answered the spoiled child, who had more than once carried his point by perseverance, and who, like his betters, delighted in the exercise of such authority — 'I will not go to Lilius's gousty room; I will stay and see that brave warrior who comes riding so gallantly along the drawbridge.'

'You must not stay, Roland,' said the lady, more positively than she usually spoke to her little favourite.

'I will,' reiterated the boy, who had already felt his consequence, and the probable chance of success.

'You *will*, Roland!' answered the lady; 'what manner of word is that? I tell you, you must go.'

'*"Will,"*' answered the forward boy, 'is a word for a man, and *"must"* is no word for a lady.'

'You are saucy, sirrah,' said the lady. 'Lilius, take him with you instantly.'

'I always thought,' said Lilius, smiling, as she seized the reluctant boy by the arm, 'that my young master must give place to my old one.'

'And you too are malapert, mistress,' said the lady. 'Hath the moon changed, that ye all of you thus forget yourselves?'

Lilius made no reply, but led off the boy, who, too proud to offer unavailing resistance, darted at his benefactress a glance which intimated plainly how willingly he would have defied her authority had he possessed the power to make good his point.

The Lady of Avenel was vexed to find how much this trifling circumstance had discomposed her at the moment when she ought naturally to have been entirely engrossed by her husband's return. But we do not recover composure by the mere feeling that agitation is mistimed. The glow of displeasure had not left the lady's cheek, her ruffled deportment was not yet entirely composed, when her husband, unhelmeted, but still

wearing the rest of his arms, entered the apartment. His appearance banished the thoughts of everything else; she rushed to him, clasped his iron-sheathed frame in her arms, and kissed his martial and manly face with an affection which was at once evident and sincere. The warrior returned her embrace and her caress with the same fondness; for the time which had passed since their union had diminished its romantic ardour, perhaps, but it had rather increased its rational tenderness, and Sir Halbert Glendinning's long and frequent absences from his castle had prevented affection from degenerating by habit into indifference.

When the first eager greetings were paid and received, the lady gazed fondly on her husband's face as she remarked — 'You are altered, Halbert: you have ridden hard and far to-day, or you have been ill?'

'I have been well, Mary,' answered the knight — 'passing well have I been; and a long ride is to me, thou well knowest, but a thing of constant custom. Those who are born noble may slumber out their lives within the walls of their castles and manor-houses; but he who hath achieved nobility by his own deeds must ever be in the saddle to show that he merits his advancement.'

While he spoke thus, the lady gazed fondly on him, as if endeavouring to read his inmost soul; for the tone in which he spoke was that of melancholy depression.

Sir Halbert Glendinning was the same, yet a different person from what he had appeared in his early years. The fiery freedom of the aspiring youth had given place to the steady and stern composure of the approved soldier and skilful politician. There were deep traces of care on those noble features, over which each emotion used formerly to pass like light clouds across a summer sky. That sky was now, not perhaps clouded, but still and grave, like that of the sober autumn evening. The forehead was higher and more bare than in early youth, and the locks which still clustered thick and dark on the warrior's head were worn away at the temples, not by age, but by the constant pressure of the steel cap, or helmet. His beard, according to the fashion of the times, grew short and thick, and was turned into mustachios on the upper lip, and peaked at the extremity. The cheek, weather-beaten and embrowned, had lost the glow of youth, but showed the vigorous complexion of active and confirmed manhood. Halbert Glendinning was, in a word, a knight to ride at a king's right hand,

to bear his banner in war, and to be his counsellor in time of peace; for his looks expressed the considerate firmness which can resolve wisely, and dare boldly. Still, over these noble features there now spread an air of dejection, of which, perhaps, the owner was not conscious, but which did not escape the observation of his anxious and affectionate partner.

'Something has happened, or is about to happen,' said the Lady of Avenel; 'this sadness sits not on your brow without cause — misfortune, national or particular, must needs be at hand.'

'There is nothing new that I wot of,' said Halbert Glendinning; 'but there is little of evil which can befall a kingdom that may not be apprehended in this unhappy and divided realm.'

'Nay, then,' said the lady, 'I see there hath really been some fatal work on foot. My Lord of Murray has not so long detained you at Holyrood, save that he wanted your help in some weighty purpose.'

'I have not been at Holyrood, Mary,' answered the knight; 'I have been several weeks abroad.'

'Abroad! and sent me no word!' replied the lady.

'What would the knowledge have availed, but to have rendered you unhappy, my love?' replied the knight; 'your thoughts would have converted the slightest breeze that curled your own lake into a tempest raging in the German Ocean.'

'And have you then really crossed the sea?' said the lady, to whom the very idea of an element which she had never seen conveyed notions of terror and of wonder — 'really left your own native land, and trodden distant shores, where the Scottish tongue is unheard and unknown?'

'Really, and really,' said the knight, taking her hand in affectionate playfulness, 'I have done this marvellous deed — have rolled on the ocean for three days and three nights, with the deep green waves dashing by the side of my pillow, and but a thin plank to divide me from it.'

'Indeed, my Halbert,' said the lady, 'that was a tempting of Divine Providence. I never bade you unbuckle the sword from your side, or lay the lance from your hand; I never bade you sit still when your honour called you to rise and ride; but are not blade and spear dangers enough for one man's life, and why would you trust rough waves and raging seas?'

'We have in Germany and in the Low Countries, as they are called,' answered Glendinning, 'men who are united with us in faith, and with whom it is fitting we should unite in

alliance. To some of these I was despatched on business as important as it was secret. I went in safety, and I returned in security : there is more danger to a man's life betwixt this and Holyrood than in all the seas that wash the lowlands of Holland.

'And the country, my Halbert, and the people,' said the lady, 'are they like our kindly Scots? or what bearing have they to strangers?'

'They are a people, Mary, strong in their wealth, which renders all other nations weak, and weak in those arts of war by which other nations are strong.'

'I do not understand you,' said the lady.

'The Hollander and the Fleming, Mary, pour forth their spirit in trade, and not in war; their wealth purchases them the arms of foreign soldiers, by whose aid they defend it. They erect dikes on the sea-shore to protect the land which they have won, and they levy regiments of the stubborn Switzers and hardy Germans to protect the treasures which they have amassed. And thus they are strong in their weakness; for the very wealth which tempts their masters to despoil them arms strangers in their behalf.'

'The slothful hinds!' exclaimed Mary, thinking and feeling like a Scotswoman of the period; 'have they hands, and fight not for the land which bore them? They should be notched off at the elbow!'

'Nay, that were but hard justice,' answered her husband; 'for their hands serve their country, though not in battle, like ours. Look at these barren hills, Mary, and at that deep winding vale by which the cattle are even now returning from their scanty browse. The hand of the industrious Fleming would cover these mountains with wood, and raise corn where we now see a starved and scanty sward of heath and ling. It grieves me, Mary, when I look on that land, and think what benefit it might receive from such men as I have lately seen -- men who seek not the idle fame derived from dead ancestors, or the bloody renown won in modern broils, but tread along the land as preservers and improvers, not as tyrants and destroyers.'

'These amendments would here be but a vain fancy, my Halbert,' answered the Lady of Avenel: 'the trees would be burned by the English foemen ere they ceased to be shrubs, and the grain that you raised would be gathered in by the first neighbour that possessed more riders than follow your train.'

Why should you repine at this? The fate that made you Scotaman by birth gave you head, and heart, and hand to uphold the name as it must needs be upheld.'

'It gave me no name to uphold,' said Halbert, pacing the floor slowly; 'my arm has been foremost in every strife, my voice has been heard in every council, nor have the wisest rebuked me. The crafty Lethington, the deep and dark Morton, have held secret council with me, and Grange and Lindcrae have owned that in the field I did the devoir of a gallant knight; but let the emergence be passed when they need my head and hand, and they only know me as son of the obscure portioner of Glendearg.'

This was a theme which the lady always dreaded; for the rank conferred on her husband, the favour in which he was held by the powerful Earl of Murray, and the high talents by which he vindicated his right to that rank and that favour, were qualities which rather increased than diminished the envy which was harboured against Sir Halbert Glendinning among a proud aristocracy, as a person originally of inferior and obscure birth, who had risen to his present eminence solely by his personal merit. The natural firmness of his mind did not enable him to despise the ideal advantages of a higher pedigree, which were held in such universal esteem by all with whom he conversed; and so open are the noblest minds to jealous inconsistencies, that there were moments in which he felt mortified that his lady should possess those advantages of birth and high descent which he himself did not enjoy, and regretted that his importance as the proprietor of Avenel was qualified by his possessing it only as the husband of the heiress. He was not so unjust as to permit any unworthy feelings to retain permanent possession of his mind, but yet they recurred from time to time, and did not escape his lady's anxious observation.

'Had we been blessed with children,' she was wont on such occasions to say to herself — 'had our blood been united in a son who might have joined my advantages of descent with my husband's personal worth, these painful and irksome reflections had not disturbed our union even for a moment. But the existence of such an heir, in whom our affections, as well as our pretensions, might have centred, has been denied to us.'

With such mutual feelings, it cannot be wondered that it gave the lady pain to hear her husband verging towards this topic of mutual discontent. On the present, as on other similar

occasions, she endeavoured to divert the knight's thoughts from this painful channel.

'How can you,' she said, 'suffer yourself to dwell upon things which profit nothing? Have you indeed no name to uphold? You the good and the brave, the wise in council and the strong in battle, have you not to support the reputation your own deeds have won—a reputation more honourable than mere ancestry can supply? Good men love and honour you, the wicked fear and the turbulent obey you; and is it not necessary you should exert yourself to ensure the endurance of that love, that honour, that wholesome fear, and that necessary obedience?'

As she thus spoke, the eye of her husband caught from her courage and comfort, and it lightened as he took her hand and replied, 'It is most true, my Mary, and I deserve thy rebuke, who forget what I am, in repining because I am not what I cannot be. I am now what the most famed ancestors of those I envy were, the mean man raised into eminence by his own exertions; and sure it is a boast as honourable to have those capacities which are necessary to the foundation of a family as to be descended from one who possessed them some centuries before. The Hay of Luncarty who bequeathed his bloody yoke to his lineage, the "dark grey man" who first founded the house of Douglas, had yet less of ancestry to boast than I have. For thou knowest, Mary, that my name derives itself from a line of ancient warriors, although my immediate forefathers preferred the humble station in which thou didst first find them; and war and counsel are not less proper to the house of Glendonwyne,¹ even in its most remote descendants, than to the proudest of their baronage.'

He strode across the hall as he spoke; and the lady smiled internally to observe how much his mind dwelt upon the prerogatives of birth, and endeavoured to establish his claims, however remote, to a share in them, at the very moment when he affected to hold them in contempt. It will easily be guessed, however, that she permitted no symptom to escape her that could show she was sensible of the weakness of her husband—a perspicacity which perhaps his proud spirit could not very easily have brooked.

As he returned from the extremity of the hall, to which he had stalked while in the act of vindicating the title of the house of Glendonwyne in its most remote branches to the full

¹ See Note 1.

privileges of aristocracy, 'Where,' he said, 'is Wolf? I have not seen him since my return, and he was usually the first to welcome my home-coming.'

'Wolf,' said the lady, with a slight degree of embarrassment, for which, perhaps, she would have found it difficult to assign any reason even to herself — 'Wolf is chained up for the present. He hath been surly to my page.'

'Wolf chained up — and Wolf surly to your page!' answered Sir Halbert Glendinning. 'Wolf never was surly to any one; and the chain will either break his spirit or render him savage. So ho, there — set Wolf free directly.'

He was obeyed; and the huge dog rushed into the hall, disturbing by his unwieldy and boisterous gambols the whole economy of reels, rocks, and distaffs with which the maidens of the household were employed when the arrival of their lord was a signal to them to withdraw, and extracting from Lillias, who was summoned to put them again in order, the natural observation, 'That the laird's pet was as troublesome as the lady's page.'

'And who is this page, Mary?' said the knight, his attention again called to the subject by the observation of the waiting-woman — 'who is this page, whom every one seems to weigh in the balance with my old friend and favourite, Wolf? When did you aspire to the dignity of keeping a page, or who is the boy?'

'I trust, my Halbert,' said the lady, not without a blush, 'you will not think your wife entitled to less attendance than other ladies of her quality?'

'Nay, Dame Mary,' answered the knight, 'it is enough you desire such an attendant. Yet I have never loved to nurse such useless menials. A lady's page — it may well suit the proud English dames to have a slender youth to bear their trains from bower to hall, fan them when they slumber, and touch the lute for them when they please to listen; but our Scottish men were wont to be above such vanities, and our Scottish youth ought to be bred to the spear and the stirrup.'

'Nay, but, my husband,' said the lady, 'I did but jest when I called this boy my page; he is in sooth a little orphan whom we saved from perishing in the lake, and whom I have since kept in the castle out of charity. Lillias, bring little Roland hither.'

Roland entered accordingly, and, flying to the lady's side, took hold of the plaits of her gown, and then turned round and

gazed with an attention, not unmingled with fear, upon the stately form of the knight. 'Roland,' said the lady, 'go kiss the hand of the noble knight, and ask him to be thy protector.' But Roland obeyed not, and, keeping his station, continued to gaze fixedly and timidly on Sir Halbert Glendinning. 'Go to the knight, boy,' said the lady; 'what dost thou fear, child? Go kiss Sir Halbert's hand.'

'I will kiss no hand save yours, lady,' answered the boy.

'Nay, but do as you are commanded, child,' replied the lady. 'He is dashed by your presence,' she said, apologising to her husband; 'but is he not a handsome boy?'

'And so is Wolf,' said Sir Halbert, as he patted his huge four-footed favourite, 'a handsome dog; but he has this double advantage over your new favourite, that he does what he is commanded, and hears not when he is praised.'

'Nay, now you are displeased with me,' replied the lady; 'and yet why should you be so? There is nothing wrong in relieving the distressed orphan, or in loving that which is in itself lovely and deserving of affection. But you have seen Mr. Warden at Edinburgh, and he has set you against the poor boy.'

'My dear Mary,' answered her husband, 'Mr. Warden better knows his place than to presume to interfere either in your affairs or in mine. I neither blame your relieving this boy nor your kindness for him. But I think, considering his birth and prospects, you ought not to treat him with injudicious fondness, which can only end in rendering him unfit for the humble situation to which Heaven has designed him.'

'Nay, but, my Halbert, do but look at the boy,' said the lady, 'and see whether he has not the air of being intended by Heaven for something nobler than a mere peasant. May he not be designed, as others have been, to rise out of a humble situation into honour and eminence?'

Thus far had she proceeded, when the consciousness that she was treading upon delicate ground at once occurred to her, and induced her to take the most natural but the worst of all courses on such occasions, whether in conversation or in an actual bog, namely, that of stopping suddenly short in the illustration which she had commenced. Her brow crimsoned, and that of Sir Halbert Glendinning was slightly overcast. But it was only for an instant; for he was incapable of mistaking his lady's meaning, or supposing that she meant intentional disrespect to him.

'Be it as you please, my love,' he replied; 'I owe you too much to contradict you in aught which may render your solitary mode of life more endurable. Make of this youth what you will, and you have my full authority for doing so; but remember he is your charge, not mine. Remember he hath limbs to do man's service, a soul and a tongue to worship God; breed him, therefore, to be true to his country and to Heaven; and for the rest, dispose of him as you list. It is, and shall rest, your own matter.'

This conversation decided the fate of Roland Græme, who from thenceforward was little noticed by the master of the mansion of Avenel, but indulged and favoured by its mistress.

This situation led to many important consequences, and, in truth, tended to bring forth the character of the youth in all its broad lights and deep shadows. As the knight himself seemed tacitly to disclaim alike interest and control over the immediate favourite of his lady, young Roland was, by circumstances, exempted from the strict discipline to which, as the retainer of a Scottish man of rank, he would otherwise have been subjected, according to all the rigour of the age. But the steward, or master of the household — such was the proud title assumed by the head domestic of each petty baron — deemed it not advisable to interfere with the favourite of the lady, and especially since she had brought the estate into the present family. Master Jasper Wingate was a man experienced, as he often boasted, in the ways of great families, and knew how to keep the steerage even, when wind and tide chanced to be in contradiction.

This prudent personage winked at much, and avoided giving opportunity for further offence, by requesting little of Roland Græme beyond the degree of attention which he was himself disposed to pay; rightly conjecturing that, however lowly the place which the youth might hold in the favour of the Knight of Avenel, still to make an evil report of him would make an enemy of the lady, without securing the favour of her husband. With these prudential considerations, and doubtless not without an eye to his own ease and convenience, he taught the boy as much, and only as much, as he chose to learn, readily admitting whatever apology it pleased his pupil to allege in excuse for idleness or negligence. As the other persons in the castle to whom such tasks were delegated readily imitated the prudential conduct of the major-domo, there was little control used towards Roland Græme, who, of course, learned no more than what a

very active mind, and a total impatience of absolute idleness, led him to acquire upon his own account, and by dint of his own exertions. The latter were especially earnest when the lady herself condescended to be his tutoress or to examine his progress.

It followed also, from his quality as my lady's favourite, that Roland was viewed with no peculiar good-will by the followers of the knight, many of whom, of the same age, and apparently similar origin, with the fortunate page, were subjected to severe observance of the ancient and rigorous discipline of a feudal retainer. To these, Roland Græme was, of course, an object of envy, and, in consequence, of dislike and detraction; but the youth possessed qualities which it was impossible to depreciate. Pride and a sense of early ambition did for him what severity and constant instruction did for others. In truth, the youthful Roland displayed that early flexibility both of body and mind which renders exercise, either mental or bodily, rather matter of sport than of study; and it seemed as if he acquired accidentally, and by starts, those accomplishments which earnest and constant instruction, enforced by frequent reproof and occasional chastisement, had taught to others. Such military exercises, such lessons of the period, as he found it agreeable or convenient to apply to, he learned so perfectly as to confound those who were ignorant how often the want of constant application is compensated by vivacity of talent and ardent enthusiasm. The lads, therefore, who were more regularly trained to arms, to horsemanship, and to other necessary exercises of the period, while they envied Roland Græme the indulgence or negligence with which he seemed to be treated, had little reason to boast of their own superior acquirements: a few hours, with the powerful exertion of a most energetic will, seemed to do for him more than the regular instruction of weeks could accomplish for others.

Under these advantages, if, indeed, they were to be termed such, the character of young Roland began to develop itself. It was bold, peremptory, decisive, and overbearing; generous if neither withstood nor contradicted; vehement and passionate if censured or opposed. He seemed to consider himself as attached to no one, and responsible to no one, except his mistress; and even over her mind he had gradually acquired that species of ascendancy which indulgence is so apt to occasion. And although the immediate followers and dependants of Sir Halbert Glendinning saw his ascendancy with jealousy, and

often took occasion to mortify his vanity, there wanted not those who were willing to acquire the favour of the Lady of Avenel by humouring and taking part with the youth whom she protected ; for although a favourite, as the poet assures us, has no friend, he seldom fails to have both followers and flatterers.

The partizans of Roland Græme were chiefly to be found amongst the inhabitants of the little hamlet on the shore of the lake. These villagers, who were sometimes tempted to compare their own situation with that of the immediate and constant followers of the knight, who attended him on his frequent journeys to Edinburgh and elsewhere, delighted in considering and representing themselves as more properly the subjects of the Lady of Avenel than of her husband. It is true, her wisdom and affection on all occasions discountenanced the distinction which was here implied ; but the villagers persisted in thinking it must be agreeable to her to enjoy their peculiar and undivided homage, or at least in acting as if they thought so ; and one chief mode by which they evinced their sentiments was by the respect they paid to young Roland Græme, the favourite attendant of the descendant of their ancient lords. This was a mode of flattery too pleasing to encounter rebuke or censure ; and the opportunity which it afforded the youth to form, as it were, a party of his own within the limits of the ancient barony of Avenel, added not a little to the audacity and decisive tone of a character which was by nature bold, impetuous, and incontrollable.

Of the two members of the household who had manifested an early jealousy of Roland Græme, the prejudices of Wolf were easily overcome ; and in process of time the noble dog slept with Bran, Luath, and the celebrated hounds of ancient days. But Mr. Warden, the chaplain, lived, and retained his dislike to the youth. That good man, single-minded and benevolent as he really was, entertained rather more than a reasonable idea of the respect due to him as a minister, and exacted from the inhabitants of the castle more deference than the haughty young page, proud of his mistress's favour, and petulant from youth and situation, was at all times willing to pay. His bold and free demeanour, his attachment to rich dress and decoration, his inaptitude to receive instruction, and his hardening himself against rebuke, were circumstances which induced the good old man, with more haste than charity, to set the forward page down as a vessel of wrath, and to presage that the youth nursed that

pride and haughtiness of spirit which goes before ruin and destruction. On the other hand, Roland evinced at times a marked dislike, and even something like contempt, of the chaplain. Most of the attendants and followers of Sir Halbert Glendinning entertained the same charitable thoughts as the reverend Mr. Warden; but while Roland was favoured by their lady, and endured by their lord, they saw no policy in making their opinions public.

Roland Græme was sufficiently sensible of the unpleasant situation in which he stood; but in the haughtiness of his heart he retorted upon the other domestics the distant, cold, and sarcastic manner in which they treated him, assumed an air of superiority which compelled the most obstinate to obedience, and had the satisfaction at least to be dreaded, if he was heartily hated.

The chaplain's marked dislike had the effect of recommending him to the attention of Sir Halbert's brother, Edward, who now, under the conventual appellation of Father Ambrose, continued to be one of the few monks who, with the Abbot Eustatius, had, notwithstanding the nearly total downfall of their faith under the regency of Murray, been still permitted to linger in the cloisters at Kennaquhair. Respect to Sir Halbert had prevented their being altogether driven out of the abbey, though their order was now in a great measure suppressed, and they were interdicted the public exercise of their ritual, and only allowed for their support a small pension out of their once splendid revenues. Father Ambrose, thus situated, was an occasional, though very rare, visitant at the Castle of Avenel, and was at such times observed to pay particular attention to Roland Græme, who seemed to return it with more depth of feeling than consisted with his usual habits.

Thus situated, years glided on, during which the Knight of Avenel continued to act a frequent and important part in the convulsions of his distracted country; while young Græme anticipated, both in wishes and personal accomplishments, the age which should enable him to emerge from the obscurity of his present situation.

CHAPTER IV

Amid their cups that freely flow'd,
Their revelry and mirth,
A youthful lord tax'd Valentine
With base and doubtful birth.

Valentine and Orson.

WHEN Roland Græme was a youth about seventeen years of age, he chanced one summer morning to descend to the mew in which Sir Halbert Glendinning kept his hawks, in order to superintend the training of an eyas, or young hawk, which he himself, at the imminent risk of neck and limbs, had taken from a celebrated eyrie in the neighbourhood, called Gledsraig. As he was by no means satisfied with the attention which had been bestowed on his favourite bird, he was not slack in testifying his displeasure to the falconer's lad, whose duty it was to have attended upon it.

'What, ho! sir knave,' exclaimed Roland, 'is it thus you feed the eyas with unwashed meat, as if you were gorging the foul brancher of a worthless hoodie-crow? By the mass, and thou hast neglected its castings also for these two days! Think'st thou I ventured my neck to bring the bird down from the crag that thou shouldst spoil her by thy neglect?' And to add force to his remonstrances, he conferred a cuff or two on the negligent attendant of the hawks, who, shouting rather louder than was necessary under all the circumstances, brought the master falconer to his assistance.

Adam Woodcock, the falconer of Avenel, was an Englishman by birth, but so long in the service of Glendinning that he had lost much of his national attachment in that which he had formed to his master. He was a favourite in his department, jealous and conceited of his skill, as masters of the game usually are; for the rest of his character, he was a jester and a parcel poet (qualities which by no means abated his natural conceit), a jolly fellow, who, though a sound Protestant, loved a flagon of ale better than a long sermon, a stout man of his hands when

need required, true to his master, and a little presuming on his interest with him.

Adam Woodcock, such as we have described him, by no means relished the freedom used by young Graeme in chastising his assistant. 'Hey, hey, my lady's page,' said he, stepping between his own boy and Roland, 'fair and softly, an it like your gilt jacket — hands off is fair play — if my boy has done amiss, I can beat him myself, and then you may keep your hands soft.'

'I will beat him and thee too,' answered Roland, without hesitation, 'an ye look not better after your business. See how the bird is cast away between you. I found the careless lurdane feeding her with unwashed flesh, and she an eyas.'¹

'Go to,' said the falconer, 'thou art but an eyas thyself, child Roland. What knowest thou of feeding? I say that the eyas should have her meat unwashed until she becomes a brancher: 'twere the ready way to give her the frounce, to wash her meat sooner, and so knows every one who knows a gled from a falcon.'

'It is thine own laziness, thou false English blood, that dost nothing but drink and sleep,' retorted the page, 'and leaves that lither lad to do the work, which he minds as little as thou.'

'And am I so idle then,' said the falconer, 'that have three cast of hawks to look after, at perch and mew, and to fly them in the field to boot? — and is my lady's page so busy a man that he must take me up short? — and am I of false English blood? I marvel what blood thou art — neither Englander nor Scot — fish nor flesh — a bastard from the Debateable Land, without either kith, kin, or ally! Marry, out upon thee, foul kite, that would fain be a tercel gentle!'

The reply to this sarcasm was a box on the ear, so well applied that it overthrew the falconer into the cistern in which water was kept for the benefit of the hawks. Up started Adam Woodcock, his wrath nowise appeased by the cold immersion, and seizing on a truncheon which stood by, would have soon requited the injury he had received, had not Roland laid his hand on his poniard, and sworn by all that was sacred that, if he offered a stroke towards him, he would sheathe the blade in his bowels. The noise was now so great that more than one of the household came in, and amongst others the major-domo, a grave personage, already mentioned, whose gold chain and white wand intimated his authority. At the appearance of

¹ There is a difference amongst authorities how long the nestling hawk should be fed with flesh which has previously been washed.

this dignitary, the strife was for the present appeased. He embraced, however, no favourable an opportunity to read Roland Græme a shrewd lecture on the impropriety of his deportment to his fellow-menials, and to assure him that, should he communicate this fray to his master (who, though now on one of his frequent expeditions, was speedily expected to return), which but for respect to his lady he would most certainly do, the residence of the culprit in the Castle of Avenel would be but of brief duration. 'But, however,' added the prudent master of the household, 'I will report the matter first to my lady.'

'Very just — very right, Master Wingate,' exclaimed several voices together; 'my lady will consider if daggers are to be drawn on us for every idle word, and whether we are to live in a well-ordered household, where there is the fear of God, or amongst drawn dirks and sharp knives.'

The object of this general resentment darted an angry glance around him, and suppressing with difficulty the desire which urged him to reply in furious or in contemptuous language, returned his dagger into the scabbard, looked disdainfully around upon the assembled menials, turned short upon his heel, and pushing aside those who stood betwixt him and the door, left the apartment.

'This will be no tree for my nest,' said the falconer, 'if this cock-sparrow is to crow over us as he seems to do.'

'He struck me with his switch yesterday,' said one of the grooms, 'because the tail of his worship's gelding was not trimmed altogether so as suited his humour.'

'And I promise you,' said the laundress, 'my young master will stick nothing to call an honest woman "slut" and "quean" if there be but a speck of soot upon his band-collar.'

'If Master Wingate do not his errand to my lady,' was the general result, 'there will be no tarrying in the same house with Roland Græme.'

The master of the household heard them all for some time, and then, motioning for universal silence, he addressed them with all the dignity of Malvolio himself. — 'My masters — not forgetting you, my mistresses — do not think the worse of me that I proceed with as much care as haste in this matter. Our master is a gallant knight, and will have his sway at home and abroad, in wood and field, in hall and bower, as the saying is. Our lady, my benison upon her! is also a noble person of long descent, and rightful heir of this place and barony, and she also loves her will; as for that matter, show me the woman who

doth not. Now, she hath favoured, doth favour, and will favour this jackanape, for what good part about him I know not, save that as one noble lady will love a messan dog, and another a screaming popinjay, and a third a Barbary ape, so doth it please our noble dame to set her affections upon this stray elf of a page, for nought that I can think of, save that she was the cause of his being saved — the more 's the pity — from drowning.' And here Master Wingate made a pause.

'I would have been his caution for a grey goat, against salt water or fresh,' said Roland's adversary, the falconer; 'marry, if he crack not a rope for stabbing or for snatching, I will be content never to hood hawk again.'

'Peace, Adam Woodcock,' said Wingate, waving his hand — 'I prithee, peace, man. Now, my lady, liking this springald, as aforesaid, differs therein from my lord, who loves never a bone in his skin. Now, is it for me to stir up strife betwixt them, and put as 'twere my finger betwixt the bark and the tree, on account of a pragmatistical youngster, whom, nevertheless, I would willingly see whipped forth of the barony? Have patience, and this boil will break without our meddling. I have been in service since I wore a beard on my chin, till now that that beard is turned grey, and I have seldom known any one better themselves even by taking the lady's part against the lord's; but never one who did not dirk himself if he took the lord's against the lady's.'

'And so,' said Liliass, 'we are to be crowed over, every one of us, men and women, cock and hen, by this little upstart? I will try titles with him first, I promise you. I fancy, Master Wingate, for as wise as you look, you will be pleased to tell what you have seen to-day, if my lady commands you?'

'To speak the truth when my lady commands me,' answered the prudential major-domo, 'is in some measure my duty, Mistress Liliass; always providing for and excepting those cases in which it cannot be spoken without breeding mischief and inconvenience to myself or my fellow-servants; for the tongue of a tale-bearer breaketh bones as well as a Jeddart staff.'¹

'But this imp of Satan is none of your friends or fellow-servants,' said Liliass; 'and I trust you mean not to stand up for him against the whole family besides?'

¹ A species of battle-axe, so called as being in especial use in that ancient burgh, whose armorial bearings still represent an armed horseman brandishing such a weapon.

'Credit me, Mistress Lillas,' replied the senior, 'should I see the time fitting, I would with right good-will give him a lick with the rough side of my tongue.'

'Enough said, Master Wingate,' answered Lillas; 'then trunt me, his song shall soon be laid. If my mistress does not ask me what is the matter below stairs before she be ten minutes of time older, she is no born woman, and my name is not Lillas Brulbourne.'

In pursuance of her plan, Mistress Lillas failed not to present herself before her mistress with all the exterior of one who is possessed of an important secret — that is, she had the corners of her mouth turned down, her eyes raised up, her lips pressed as fast together as if they had been sewed up, to prevent her blabbing, and an air of prim mystical importance diffused over her whole person and demeanour, which seemed to intimate, 'I know something which I am resolved not to tell you!'

Lillas had rightly read her mistress's temper, who, wise and good as she was, was yet a daughter of grandame Eve, and could not witness this mysterious bearing on the part of her waiting-woman without longing to ascertain the secret cause. For a space, Mrs. Lillas was obdurate to all inquiries, sighed, turned her eyes up higher yet to Heaven, hoped for the best, but had nothing particular to communicate. All this, as was most natural and proper, only stimulated the lady's curiosity; neither was her importunity to be parried with — 'Thank God, I am no makebate -- no tale-bearer -- thank God, I never envied any one's favour, or was anxious to propale their misdemeanour — only, thank God, there has been no bloodshed and murder in the house — that is all.'

'Bloodshed and murder!' exclaimed the lady, 'what does the quean mean? If you speak not plain out, you shall have something you will scarce be thankful for.'

'Nay, my lady,' answered Lillas, eager to disburden her mind, or, in Chaucer's phrase, to 'unbuckle her mail,' 'if you bid me speak out the truth, you must not be moved with what might displease you: Roland Graeme has dirked Adam Woodcock — that is all.'

'Good Heaven!' said the lady, turning pale as ashes, 'is the man slain?'

'No, madam,' replied Lillas, 'but slain he would have been if there had not been ready help; but maybe it is your ladyship's pleasure that this young esquire shall poniard the servants, as well as switch and baton them?'

'Go to, minion,' said the lady, 'you are saucy; tell the master of the household to attend me instantly.'

Lilian hastened to seek out Mr. Wingate, and hurry him to his lady's presence, speaking as a word in season to him on the way, 'I have set the stone a-trowling, look that you do not let it stand still.'

The steward, too prudential a person to commit himself otherwise, answered by a sly look and a nod of intelligence, and presently after stood in the presence of the Lady of Avenel, with a look of great respect for his lady, partly real, partly affected, and an air of great sagacity, which inferred no ordinary conceit of himself.

'How is this, Wingate,' said the lady, 'and what rule do you keep in the castle, that the domestics of Sir Halbert Glendinning draw the dagger on each other as in a cavern of thieves and murderers? Is the wounded man much hurt? and what — what hath become of the unhappy boy?'

'There is no one wounded as yet, madam,' replied he of the golden chain; 'it passes my poor skill to say how many may be wounded before Pasche,¹ if some rule be not taken with this youth; not but the youth is a fair youth,' he added, correcting himself, 'and able at his exercise; but somewhat too ready with the ends of his fingers, the butt of his riding-switch, and the point of his dagger.'

'And whose fault is that,' said the lady, 'but yours, who should have taught him better discipline than to brawl or to draw his dagger?'

'If it please your ladyship so to impose the blame on me,' answered the steward, 'it is my part, doubtless, to bear it; only I submit to your consideration that, unless I nailed his weapon to the scabbard, I could no more keep it still than I could fix quicksilver, which defied even the skill of Raymond Lullius.'

'Tell me not of Raymond Lullius,' said the lady, losing patience, 'but send me the chaplain hither. You grow all of you too wise for me during your lord's long and repeated absences. I would to God his affairs would permit him to remain at home and rule his own household, for it passes my wit and skill.'

'God forbid, my lady!' said the old domestic, 'that you should sincerely think what you are now pleased to say: your old servants might well hope that, after so many years' duty, you would do their service more justice than to distrust their grey hairs, because they cannot rule the peevish humour of a

¹ Easter.

green head, which the owner carries, it may be, a brace of inches higher than becomes him.'

'Leave me,' said the lady; 'Sir Halbert's return must now be expected daily, and he will look into these matters himself — leave me, I say, Wingate, without saying more of it. I know you are honest, and I believe the boy is petulant; and yet I think it is my favour which hath set all of you against him.'

The steward bowed and retired, after having been silenced in a second attempt to explain the motives on which he acted.

The chaplain arrived; but neither from him did the lady receive much comfort. On the contrary, she found him disposed, in plain terms, to lay to the door of her indulgence all the disturbances which the fiery temper of Roland Grame had already occasioned, or might hereafter occasion, in the family. 'I would,' he said, 'honoured lady, that you had deigned to be ruled by me in the outset of this matter, with it is easy to stem evil in the fountain, but hard to struggle against it in the stream. You, honoured madam — a word which I do not use according to the vain forms of this world, but because I have ever loved and honoured you as an honourable and an elect lady — you, I say, madam, have been pleased, contrary to my poor but earnest counsel, to raise this boy from his station into one approaching to your own.'

'What mean you, reverend sir?' said the lady. 'I have made this youth a page; is there aught in my doing so that does not become my character and quality?'

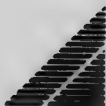
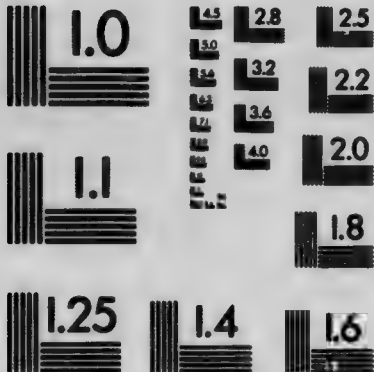
'I dispute not, madam,' said the pertinacious preacher, 'your benevolent purpose in taking charge of this youth, or your title to give him this idle character of page, if such was your pleasure; though what the education of a boy in the train of a female can tend to, save to ingraft foppery and effeminacy on conceit and arrogance, it passes my knowledge to discover. But I blame you more directly for having taken little care to guard him against the perils of his condition, or to tame and humble a spirit naturally haughty, overbearing, and impatient. You have brought into your bower a lion's cub; delighted with the beauty of his fur, and the grace of his gambols, you have bound him with no fetters befitting the fierceness of his disposition. You have let him grow up as unawed as if he had been still a tenant of the forest, and now you are surprised, and call out for assistance, when he begins to ramp, rend, and tear, according to his proper nature.'

'Mr. Warden,' said the lady, considerably offended, 'you



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are my husband's ancient friend, and I believe your love sincere to him and to his household. Yet let me say, that when I asked you for counsel, I expected not this asperity of rebuke. If I have done wrong in loving this poor orphan lad more than others of his class, I scarce think the error merited such severe censure; and if stricter discipline were required to keep his fiery temper in order, it ought, I think, to be considered that I am a woman, and that, if I have erred in this matter, it becomes a friend's part rather to aid than to rebuke me. I would these evils were taken order with before my lord's return. He loves not domestic discord or domestic brawls; and I would not willingly that he thought such could arise from one whom I favoured. What do you counsel me to do?

'Dismiss this youth from your service, madam,' replied the preacher.

'You cannot bid me do so,' said the lady — 'you cannot, as a Christian and a man of humanity, bid me turn away an unprotected creature against whom my favour — my injudicious favour, if you will — has reared up so many enemies.'

'It is not necessary you should altogether abandon him, though you dismiss him to another service, or to a calling better suiting his station and character,' said the preacher; 'elsewhere he may be an useful and profitable member of the common-weal; here he is but a makebate and a stumbling-block of offence. The youth has snatches of sense and of intelligence, though he lacks industry. I will myself give him letters commendatory to Olearius Schinderhausen, a learned professor at the famous university of Leyden, where they lack an under-janitor; where, besides gratis instruction, if God give him the grace to seek it, he will enjoy five merks by the year, and the professor's cast-off suit, which he disparts with biennially.'

'This will never do, good Mr. Warden,' said the lady, scarce able to suppress a smile; 'we will think more at large upon this matter. In the meanwhile, I trust to your remonstrances with this wild boy and with the family for restraining these violent and unseemly jealousies and bursts of passion; and I entreat you to press on him and them their duty in this respect towards God and towards their master.'

'You shall be obeyed, madam,' said Warden. 'On the next Thursday I exhort the family, and will, with God's blessing, so wrestle with the demon of wrath and violence which hath entered into my little flock that I trust to bound the wolf out of the fold, as if he were chased away with ban-dogs.'

This was the part of the conference from which Mr. Warden derived the greatest pleasure. The pulpit was at that time the same powerful engine for affecting popular feeling which the press has since become, and he had been no unsuccessful preacher, as we have already seen. It followed as a natural consequence that he rather over-estimated the powers of his own oratory, and, like some of his brethren about the period, was glad of an opportunity to handle any matters of importance, whether public or private, the discussion of which could be dragged into his discourse. In that rude age the delicacy was unknown which prescribed time and place to personal exhortations; and as the court preacher often addressed the king individually, and dictated to him the conduct he ought to observe in matters of state, so the nobleman himself, or any of his retainers, were, in the chapel of the feudal castle, often incensed or appalled, as the case might be, by the discussion of their private faults in the evening exercise, and by spiritual censures directed against them specifically, personally, and by name.

The sermon by means of which Henry Warden purposed to restore concord and good order to the Castle of Avenel bore for text the well-known words, 'He who striketh with the sword shall perish by the sword,' and was a singular mixture of good sense and powerful oratory with pedantry and bad taste. He enlarged a good deal on the word 'striketh,' which he assured his hearers comprehended blows given with the point as well as with the edge, and more generally shooting with hand-gun, cross-bow or long-bow, thrusting with a lance, or doing anything whatever by which death might be occasioned to the adversary. In the same manner, he proved satisfactorily that the word 'sword' comprehended all descriptions, whether backsword or basket-hilt, cut-and-thrust or rapier, falchion or scimitar. 'But if,' he continued, with still greater animation, 'the text includeth in its anathema those who strike with any of those weapons which man hath devised for the exercise of his open hostility, still more doth it comprehend such as from their form and size are devised rather for the gratification of privy malice by treachery than for the destruction of an enemy prepared and standing upon his defence. Such,' he proceeded, looking sternly at the place where the page was seated on a cushion at the feet of his mistress, and wearing in his crimson belt a gay dagger with a gilded hilt — 'such, more especially, I hold to be those implements of death which, in our modern

and fantastic times, are worn not only by thieves and cut-throats, to whom they most properly belong, but even by those who attend upon women, and wait in the chambers of honourable ladies. Yes, my friends, every species of this unhappy weapon, framed for all evil and for no good, is comprehended under this deadly denunciation : whether it be a stilet, which we have borrowed from the treacherous Italian, or a dirk, which is borne by the savage Highlandmen, or a whinger, which is carried by our own Border thieves and cut-throats, or a dud-geon-dagger, all are alike engines invented by the devil himself, for ready implements of deadly wrath, sudden to execute, and difficult to be parried. Even the common sword-and-buckler brawler despises the use of such a treacherous and malignant instrument, which is therefore fit to be used, not by men or soldiers, but by those who, trained under female discipline, become themselves effeminate hermaphrodites, having female spite and female cowardice added to the infirmities and evil passions of their masculine nature.'

The effect which this oration produced upon the assembled congregation of Avenel cannot very easily be described. The lady seemed at once embarrassed and offended ; the menials could hardly contain, under an affectation of deep attention, the joy with which they heard the chaplain launch his thunders at the head of the unpopular favourite, and the weapon which they considered as a badge of affectation and finery. Mrs. Lillias crested and drew up her head with all the deep-felt pride of gratified resentment ; while the steward, observing a strict neutrality of aspect, fixed his eyes upon an old scutcheon on the opposite side of the wall, which he seemed to examine with the utmost accuracy, more willing, perhaps, to incur the censure of being inattentive to the sermon than that of seeming to listen with marked approbation to what appeared so distasteful to his mistress.

The unfortunate subject of the harangue, whom nature had endowed with passions which had hitherto found no effectual restraint, could not disguise the resentment which he felt at being thus directly held up to the scorn, as well as the censure, of the assembled inhabitants of the little world in which he lived. His brow grew red — his lip grew pale — he set his teeth — he clenched his hand, and then with mechanical readiness grasped the weapon of which the clergyman had given so furious a character ; and at length, as the preacher heightened the colouring of his invective, he felt his rage become so un-

governable that, fearful of being carried into some deed of desperate violence, he rose up, crossed the chapel with hasty steps, and left the congregation.

The preacher was surprised into a sudden pause, while the fiery youth shot across him like a flash of lightning, regarding him as he passed, as if he had wished to dart from his eyes the same power of blighting and of consuming. But no sooner had he crossed the chapel, and shut with violence behind him the door of the vaulted entrance by which it communicated with the castle, than the impropriety of his conduct supplied Warden with one of those happier subjects for eloquence, of which he knew how to take advantage for making a suitable impression on his hearers. He paused for an instant, and then pronounced, in a slow and solemn voice, the deep anathema : ' He hath gone out from us because he was not of us : the sick man hath been offended at the wholesome bitter of the medicine — the wounded patient hath flinched from the friendly knife of the surgeon — the sheep hath fled from the sheepfold and delivered himself to the wolf, because he could not assume the quiet and humble conduct demanded of us by the great Shepherd. Ah ! my brethren, beware of wrath — beware of pride — beware of the deadly and destroying sin which so often shows itself to our frail eyes in the garments of light ! What is our earthly honour ? Pride, and pride only. What our earthly gifts and graces ? Pride and vanity. Voyagers speak of Indian men who deck themselves with shells, and anoint themselves with pigments, and boast of their attire as we do of our miserable carnal advantages. Pride could draw down the morning-star from Heaven even to the verge of the pit. Pride and self-opinion kindled the flaming sword which waves us off from Paradise. Pride made Adam mortal, and a weary wanderer on the face of the earth which he had else been at this day the immortal lord of. Pride brought amongst us sin, and doubles every sin it has brought. It is the outpost which the devil and the flesh most stubbornly maintain against the assaults of grace ; and until it be subdued, and its barriers levelled with the very earth, there is more hope of a fool than of the sinner. Rend, then, from your bosoms this accursed shoot of the fatal apple : tear it up by the roots, though it be twisted with the chords of your life. Pront by the example of the miserable sinner that has passed from us, and embrace the means of grace while it is called to-day — ere your conscience is seared as with a firebrand, and your ears deafened like those of

the adder, and your heart hardened like the nether millstone. Up, then, and be doing : wrestle and overcome ; resist, and the enemy shall flee from you. Watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation, and let the stumbling of others be your warning and your example. Above all, rely not on yourselves, for such self-confidence is even the worst symptom of the disorder itself. The Pharisee perhaps deemed himself humble while he stooped in the Temple, and thanked God that he was not as other men, and even as the publican. But while his kness touched the marble pavement, his head was as high as the topmost pinnacle of the Temple. Do not therefore deceive yourselves, and offer false coin, where the purest you can present is but as dross : think not that such will pass the assay of Omnipotent Wisdom. Yet shrink not from the task because, as is my bounden duty, I do not disguise from you its difficulties. Self-searching can do much — meditation can do much — grace can do all.'

And he concluded with a touching and animating exhortation to his hearers to seek Divine grace, which is perfected in human weakness.

The audience did not listen to this address without being considerably affected ; though it might be doubted whether the feelings of triumph excited by the disgraceful retreat of the favourite page did not greatly qualify in the minds of many the exhortations of the preacher to charity and to humility. And, in fact, the expression of their countenances much resembled the satisfied, triumphant air of a set of children, who, having just seen a companion punished for a fault in which they had no share, con their task with double glee, both because they themselves are out of the scrape and because the culprit is in it.

With very different feelings did the Lady of Avenel seek her own apartment. She felt angry at Warden having made a domestic matter, in which she took a personal interest, the subject of such public discussion. But this she knew the good man claimed as a branch of his Christian liberty as a preacher, and also that it was vindicated by the universal custom of his brethren. But the self-willed conduct of her *protégé* afforded her yet deeper concern. That he had broken through, in so remarkable a degree, not only the respect due to her presence, but that such was paid to religious admonition in those days with which peculiar reverence, argued a spirit as untameable as his enemies had represented him to possess. And yet, so far as he had been under her own eye, she had seen no more of that

fiery spirit than appeared to her to become his years and his vivacity. This opinion might be founded in some degree on partiality; in some degree, too, it might be owing to the kindness and indulgence which she had always extended to him; but still she thought it impossible that she could be totally mistaken in the estimate she had formed of his character. The extreme of violence is scarce consistent with a course of continued hypocrisy (although Lilius charitably hinted that in some instances they were happily united), and therefore she could not exactly trust the report of others against her own experience and observation. The thoughts of this orphan boy clung to her heartstrings with a fondness for which she herself was unable to account. He seemed to have been sent to her by Heaven to fill up those intervals of languor and vacuity which deprived her of much enjoyment. Perhaps he was not less dear to her because she well saw that he was a favourite with no one else, and because she felt that to give him up was to afford the judgment of her husband and others a triumph over her own — a circumstance not quite indifferent to the best of spouses of either sex.

In short, the Lady of Avenel formed the internal resolution that she would not desert her page while her page could be rationally protected; and, with the view of ascertaining how far this might be done, she caused him to be summoned to her presence.

CHAPTER V

In the wild storm,
The seaman hews his mast down, and the merchant
Heaves to the billows wares he once deem'd precious ;
So prince and peer, 'mid popular contentions,
Cast off their favourites.

Old Play.

IT was some time ere Roland Græme appeared. The messenger (his old friend Liliass) had at first attempted to open the door of his little apartment, with the charitable purpose, doubtless, of enjoying the confusion, and marking the demeanour, of the culprit. But an oblong bit of iron, yeilded a bolt, was passed across the door on the inside, and prevented her benign intentions. Liliass knocked, and called at intervals, 'Roland — Roland Græme — *Master* Roland Græme (an emphasis on the word 'Master'), will you be pleased to undo the door? What ails you? — are you at your prayers in private, to complete the devotion which you left unfinished in public? Surely we must have a screened seat for you in the chapel, that your gentility may be free from the eyes of common folks.' Still no whisper was heard in reply. 'Well, Master Roland,' said the waiting-maid, 'I must tell my mistress that, if she would have an answer, she must either come herself or send those on whom you depend to you who can beat the door down.'

'What say you, my lady?' answered the page from within.

'My lady is at the door and you shall hear,' answered the waiting-maid. 'I trow it becomes my lady's message to be listened to face to face; and I will not, for your idle pleasure, whistle it through a key-hole.'

'Your mistress's name,' said the page, opening the door, 'is too fair a cover for your impertinence. What says my lady?'

'That you will be pleased to come to her directly, in the withdrawing-room,' answered Liliass. 'I presume she has some

directions for you concerning the forms to be observed in leaving chapel in future.'

'Say to my lady that I will directly wait on her,' answered the page; and, returning into his apartment, he once more locked the door in the face of the waiting-maid.

'Rare courtesy!' muttered Lilius; and, returning to her mistress, acquainted her that Roland Græme would wait on her when it suited his convenience.

'What! is that his phrase or your own addition, Lilius?' said the lady, coolly.

'Nay, madam,' replied the attendant, not directly answering the question. 'he looked as if he could have said much more impertinent things than that, if I had been willing to hear them. But here he comes to answer for himself.'

Roland Græme entered the apartment with a loftier mien and somewhat a higher colour than his wont; there was embarrassment in his manner, but it was neither that of fear nor of penitence.

'Young man,' said the lady, 'what trow you I am to think of your conduct this day?'

'If it has offended you, madam, I am deeply grieved,' replied the youth.

'To have offended me alone,' replied the lady, 'were but little. You have been guilty of conduct which will highly offend your master — of violence to your fellow-servants, and of disrespect to God Himself, in the person of His ambassador.'

'Permit me again to reply,' said the page, 'that, if I have offended my only mistress, friend, and benefactress, it includes the sum of my guilt, and deserves the sum of my penitence. Sir Halbert Glendinning calls me not servant, nor do I call him master: he is not entitled to blame me for chastising an insolent groom; nor do I fear the wrath of Heaven for treating with scorn the unauthorised interference of a meddling preacher.'

The Lady of Avenel had before this seen symptoms in her favourite of boyish petulance and of impatience of censure or reproof. But his present demeanour was of a graver and more determined character, and she was for a moment at a loss how she should treat the youth, who seemed to have at once assumed the character not only of a man, but of a bold and determined one. She paused an instant, and then assuming the dignity which was natural to her, she said, 'Is it to me, Roland, that you hold this language? Is it for the purpose of

making me repent the favour I have shown you that you declare yourself independent both of an earthly and a Heavenly master? Have you forgotten what you were, and to what the loss of my protection would speedily again reduce you?

'Lady,' said the page, 'I have forgot nothing: I remember but too much. I know that, but for you, I should have perished in yon blue waves,' pointing, as he spoke, to the lake, which was seen through the window, agitated by the western wind. 'Your goodness has gone farther, madam: you have protected me against the malice of others, and against my own folly. You are free, if you are willing, to abandon the orphan you have reared. You have left nothing undone by him, and he complains of nothing. And yet lady, do not think I have been ungrateful: I have endured something on my part, which I would have borne for the sake of no one but my benefactress.'

'For my sake!' said the lady; 'and what is it that I can have subjected you to endure, which can be remembered with other feelings than those of thanks and gratitude?'

'You are too just, madam, to require me to be thankful for the cold neglect with which your husband has uniformly treated me — neglect not unmingled with fixed aversion. You are too just, madam, to require me to be grateful for the constant and unceasing marks of scorn and malevolence with which I have been treated by others, or for such a homily as that with which your reverend chaplain has, at my expense, this very day regaled the assembled household.'

'Heard mortal ears the like of this!' said the waiting-maid, with her hands expanded, and her eyes turned up to Heaven; 'he speaks as if he were son of an earl, or of a belted knight the least penny!'

The page glanced on her a look of supreme contempt, but vouchsafed no other answer. His mistress, who began to feel herself seriously offended, and yet sorry for the youth's folly, took up the same tone.

'Indeed, Roland, you forget yourself so strangely,' said she, 'that you will tempt me to take serious measures to lower you in your own opinion by reducing you to your proper station in society.'

'And that,' added Lillas, 'would be best done by turning him out the same beggar's brat that your ladyship took him in.'

'Lillas speaks too rudely,' continued the lady, 'but she has

spoken the truth, young man; nor do I think I ought to spare that pride which hath so completely turned your head. You have been tricked up with fine garments, and treated like the son of a gentleman, until you have forgot the fountain of your churlish blood.'

'Craving your pardon, most honourable madam, Lilius hath not spoken truth, nor does your ladyship know aught of my descent which should entitle you to treat it with such decided scorn. I am no beggar's brat: my grandmother begged for no one, here nor elsewhere; she would have perished sooner on the bare moor. We were harried out and driven from our home—a chance which has happened elsewhere, and to others. Avenel Castle, with its lake and its towers, was not at all times able to protect its inhabitants from want and desolation.'

'Hear but his assurance!' said Lilius; 'he upbraids my lady with the distresses of her family!'

'It had indeed been a theme more gratefully spared,' said the lady, affected nevertheless with the allusion.

'It was necessary, madam, for my vindication,' said the page, 'or I had not even hinted at a word that might give you pain. But believe, honoured lady, I am of no churl's blood. My proper descent I know not; but my only relation has said, and my heart has echoed it back and attested the truth, that I am sprung of gentle blood, and deserve gentle usage.'

'And upon an assurance so vague as this,' said the lady, 'do you propose to expect all the regard, all the privileges, befitting high rank and distinguished birth, and become a contender for concessions which are only due to the noble? Go to, sir, know yourself, or the master of the household shall make you know you are liable to the scourge as a malapert boy. You have tasted too little the discipline fit for your age and station.'

'The master of the household shall taste of my dagger ere I taste of his discipline,' said the page, giving way to his restrained passion. 'Lady, I have been too long the vassal of a pantoufle, and the slave of a silver whistle. You must henceforth find some other to answer your call, and let him be of birth and spirit mean enough to brook the scorn of your menials and to call a church vassal his master.'

'I have deserved this insult,' said the lady, 'douring deeply, for so long enduring and fostering your— Begone, sir. Leave this castle to-night. I will see— the means of subsistence till you find some honest mode— sport, though

I fear your imaginary grandeur will be above all others save those of rapine and violence. Begone, sir, and see my face no more.

The page threw himself at her feet in an agony of sorrow. 'My dear and honoured mistress ——' he said, but was unable to bring out another syllable.

'Arise, sir,' said the lady, 'and let go my mantle : hypocrisy is a poor cloak for ingratitude.'

'I am incapable of either, madam,' said the page, springing up with the hasty start of passion which belonged to his rapid and impetuous temper. 'Think not I meant to implore permission to reside here ; it has been long my determination to leave Avenel, and I will never forgive myself for having permitted you to say the word "begone" ere I said, "I leave you." I did but kneel to ask your forgiveness for an ill-considered word used in the height of displeasure, but which ill became my mouth as addressed to you. Other grace I asked not ; you have done much for me, but I repeat, that you better know what you yourself have done than what I have suffered.'

'Roland,' said the lady, somewhat appeased, and relenting towards her favourite, 'you had me to appeal to when you were aggrieved. You were neither called upon to suffer wrong nor entitled to resent it when you were under my protection.'

'And what,' said the youth, 'if I sustained wrong from those you loved and favoured, was I to disturb your peace with idle tale-bearings and eternal complaints ? No, madam ; I have borne my own burden in silence, and without disturbing you with murmurs ; and the respect which you accuse me of wanting furnishes the only reason why I have neither appealed to you nor taken vengeance at my own hand in a manner far more effectual. It is well, however, that we part. I was not born to be a stipendiary, favoured by his mistress until ruined by the calumnies of others. May Heaven multiply its choicest blessings on your honoured head ; and, for your sake, upon all that are dear to you !'

He was about to leave the apartment, when the lady called upon him to return. He stood still, while she thus addressed him : 'It was not my intention, nor would it be just, even in the height of my displeasure, to dismiss you without the means of support : take this purse of gold.'

'Forgive me, lady,' said the boy, 'and let me go hence with the consciousness that I have not been degraded to the point of accepting alms. If my poor services can be placed against

the expense of my apparel and my maintenance, I only remain debtor to you for my life, and that alone is a debt which I can never repay; put up then that purse, and only say instead that you do not part from me in anger.'

'No, not in anger,' said the lady, 'in sorrow rather for your wilfulness; but take the gold — you cannot but need it.'

'May God evermore bless . . . for the kind tone and the kind word! but the gold I cannot take. I am able of body, and do not lack friends so wholly as you may think; for the time may come that I may yet show myself more thankful than by mere words.' He threw himself on his knees, kissed the hand which she did not withdraw, and then hastily left the apartment.

Lilias for a moment or two kept her eye fixed on her mistress, who looked unusually pale that she seemed about to faint; but the lady instantly recovered herself, and declining the assistance which her attendant offered her, walked to her own apartment.

CHAPTER VI

Thou hast each secret of the household, *Francis*.
I dare be sworn thou hast been in the buttery
Steeping thy curious humour in fat ale,
And in the butler's tattle — ay, or chatting
With the glib waiting-woman o'er her comfits —
These bear the key to each domestic mystery.

Old Play.

UPON the morrow succeeding the scene we have described, the disgraced favourite left the castle; and at breakfast-time the cautious old steward and Mrs. Liliass sat in the apartment of the latter personage, holding grave converse on the important event of the day, sweetened by a small treat of comfits, to which the providence of Mr. Wingate had added a little flask of racy canary.

'He is gone at last,' said the abigail, sipping her glass; 'and here is to his good journey.'

'Amen,' answered the steward, gravely; 'I wish the poor deserted lad no ill.'

'And he is gone like a wild duck, as he came,' continued Mrs. Liliass; 'no lowering of drawbridges or pacing along causeways for him. My master has pushed off in the boat which they call the "Little Herod" (more shame to them for giving the name of a Christian to wood and iron), and has rowed himself by himself to the further side of the loch, and off and away with himself, and left all his finery strewed about his room. I wonder who is to clean his trumpery out after him — though the things are worth lifting too.'

'Doubtless, Mistress Liliass,' answered the master of the household; 'in the which case I am free to think they will not long cumber the floor.'

'And now tell me, Master Wingate,' continued the damsel, 'do not the very cockles of your heart rejoice at the house being rid of this upstart whelp, that flung us all into shadow?'

'Why, Mistress Liliass,' replied Wingate, 'as to rejoicing—those who have lived as long in great families as has been my lot will be in no hurry to rejoice at anything. And for Roland Graeme, though he may be a good riddance in the main, yet what says the very sooth proverb, "Seldom comes a better."'

'Seldom comes a better, indeed!' echoed Mrs. Liliass. 'I say, never can come a worse, or one half so bad. He might have been the ruin of our poor dear mistress (here she used her kerchief), body and soul, and estate too; for she spent more coin on his apparel than on any four servants about the house.'

'Mistress Liliass,' said the sage steward, 'I do opine that our mistress requireth not this pity at your hands, being in all respects competent to take care of her own body, soul, and estate into the bargain.'

'You would not mayhap have said so,' answered the waiting-woman, 'had you seen how like Lot's wife she looked when young master took his leave. My mistress is a good lady, and a virtuous, and a well-doing lady, and a well-spoken of—but I would not Sir Halbert had seen her last evening for two and a plack.'

'Oh, foy! foy! foy!' reiterated the steward; 'servants should hear and see, and say nothing. Besides that, my lady is utterly devoted to Sir Halbert, as well she may, being, as he is, the most renowned knight in these parts.'

'Well—well,' said the abigail, 'I mean no more harm; but they that seek least renown abroad are most apt to find quiet at home, that's all; and my lady's lonesome situation is to be considered, that made her fain to take up with the first beggar's brat that a dog brought her out of the loch.'

'And, therefore,' said the steward, 'I say, rejoice not too much or too hastily, Mistress Liliass: for if your lady wished a favourite to pass away the time, depend upon it, the time will not pass lighter now that he is gone. So she will have another favourite to choose for herself, and be assured, if she wishes such a toy, she will not lack one.'

'And where should she choose one, but among her own tried and faithful servants,' said Mrs. Liliass, 'who have broken her bread and drunk her drink for so many years? I have known many a lady as high as she is that never thought either of a friend or favourite beyond their own waiting-woman—always having a proper respect, at the same time, for their old and faithful master of the household, Master Wingate.'

'Truly, Mistress Liliass,' replied the steward, 'I do partly see the mark at which you shoot, but I doubt your bolt will fall short. Matters being with our lady as it likes you to suppose, it will neither be your crimped pinnars, Mistress Liliass — speaking of them with due respect — nor my silver hair or golden chain, that will fill up the void which Roland Graeme must needs leave in our lady's leisure. There will be a learned young divine with some new doctrine; a learned leech with some new drug; a bold cavalier, who will not be refused the favour of wearing her colours at a running at the ring; a cunning harper that could harp the heart out of woman's breast, as they say Signor David Rizzio did to our poor Queen — these are the sort of folk who supply the loss of a well-favoured favourite, and not an old steward or a middle-aged waiting-woman.'

'Well,' replied Liliass, 'you have experience, Master Wingate, and truly I would my master would leave off his pricking hither and thither, and look better after the affairs of his household. There will be a Papistrie among us next, for what should I see among master's clothes but a string of gold beads? I promise you, aves and credos both! I seized on them like a falcon.'

'I doubt it not — I doubt it not,' said the steward, sagaciously nodding his head; 'I have often noticed that the boy had strange observances which savoured of Popery, and that he was very jealous to conceal them. But you will find the Catholic under the Presbyterian cloak as often as the knave under the friar's hood — what then? we are all mortal. Right proper beads they are,' he added, looking attentively at them, 'and may weigh four ounces of fine gold.'

'And I will have them melted down presently,' she said, 'before they be the misguiding of some poor blinded soul.'

'Very cautious, indeed, Mistress Liliass,' said the steward, nodding his head in assent.

'I will have them made,' said Mrs. Liliass, 'into a pair of shoe-buckles; I would not wear the Pope's trinkets or whatever has once borne the shape of them, one inch above my instep, were they diamonds instead of gold. But this is what has come of Father Ambrose coming about the castle, as demure as a cat that is about to steal cream.'

'Father Ambrose is our master's brother,' said the steward, gravely.

'Very true, Master Wingate,' answered the dame; 'but is that a good reason why he should pervert the king's liege subjects to Papistrie?'

'Heaven forbid, Mistress Liliás,' answered the sententious major-domo; 'but yet there are worse folk than the Papists.'

'I wonder where they are to be found,' said the waiting-woman, with some asperity; 'but I believe, Master Wingate, if one were to speak to you about the devil himself, you would say there were worse people than Satan.'

'Assuredly I might say so,' replied the steward, 'supposing that I saw Satan standing at my elbow.'

The waiting-woman started, and having exclaimed, 'God bless us!' added, 'I wonder, Master Wingate, you can take pleasure in frightening one thus.'

'Nay, Mistress Liliás, I had no such purpose,' was the reply; 'but look you here — the Papists are but put down for the present, but who knows how long this word "present" will last? There are two great Popish earls in the north of England that abominate the very word "Reformation": I mean the Northumberland and Westmoreland earls, men of power enough to shake any throne in Christendom. Then, though our Scottish King be, God bless him, a true Protestant, yet he is but a boy; and here is his mother that was our Queen — I trust there is no harm to say God bless her too — and she is a Catholic; and many begin to think she has had but hard measure, such as the Hamiltons in the west, and some of our Border clans here, and the Gordons in the north, who are all wishing to see a new world; and if such a new world should chance to come up, it is like that the Queen will take back her own crown, and that the mass and the cross will come up, and then down go pulpits, Geneva gowns, and black silk skull-caps.'

'And have you, Master Jasper Wingate, who have heard the Word, and listened unto pure and precious Mr. Henry Warden — have you, I say, the patience to speak, or but to think, of Popery coming down on us like a storm, or of the woman Mary again making the royal seat of Scotland a throne of abomination? No marvel that you are so civil to the cowed monk, Father Ambrose, when he comes hither with his downcast eyes that he never raises to my lady's face, and with his low sweet-toned voice, and his *benedictes*, and his benisons; and who so ready to take them kindly as Master Wingate?'

'Mistress Liliás,' replied the butler, with an air which was intended to close the debate, 'there are reasons for all things. If I received Father Ambrose debonairly, and suffered him to steal a word now and then with this same Roland Græme, it was not that I cared a brass boddle for his benison or malison

either, but only because I respected my master's blood. And who can answer, if Mary come in again, whether he may not be as stout a tree to lean to as ever his brother hath proved to us? For down goes the Earl of Murray when the Queen comes by her own again; and good is his luck if he can keep the head on his own shoulders. And down goes our knight with the Earl, his patron; and who so like to mount into his empty saddle as this same Father Ambrose? The Pope of Rome can scone dispense with his vows, and then we should have Sir Edward the soldier, instead of Ambrose the priest.'

Anger and astonishment kept Mrs. Lilius silent, while her old friend, in his self-complacent manner, was making known to her his political speculations. At length her resentment found utterance in words of great ire and scorn. 'What, Master Wingate! have you eaten my mistress's bread, to say nothing of my master's, so many years, that you could live to think of her being dispossessed of her own Castle of Avenel by a wretched monk who is not a drop's blood to her in the way of relation? I, that am but a woman, would try first whether my rock or his cowl was the better metal. Shame on you, Master Wingate! If I had not held you as so old an acquaintance, this should have gone to my lady's ears, though I had been called pickthank and tale-pyot for my pains, as when I told of Roland Graeme shooting the wild swan.'

Master Wingate was somewhat dismayed at perceiving that the details which he had given of his far-sighted political views had produced on his hearer rather suspicion of his fidelity than admiration of his wisdom, and endeavoured as hastily as possible to apologise and to explain, although internally extremely offended at the unreasonable view, as he deemed it, which it had pleased Mistress Lilius Bradbourne to take of his expressions; and mentally convinced that her disapprobation of his sentiments arose solely out of the consideration that, though Father Ambrose, supposing him to become the master of the castle, would certainly require the services of a steward, yet those of a waiting-woman would, in the supposed circumstances, be altogether superfluous.

After his explanation had been received as explanations usually are, the two friends separated; Lilius to attend the silver whistle which called her to her mistress's chamber, and the sapient major-domo to the duties of his own department.

They parted with less than their usual degree of reverence and regard; for the steward felt that his worldly wisdom was rebuked by the more disinterested attachment of the waiting-woman, and Mistress Lilius Bradbourne was compelled to consider her old friend as something little better than a time-server.

CHAPTER VII

When I hae a saxpence under my thumb,
Then I get credit in ilka town ;
But when I am puir, they wld me gae by.
O poverty parts good company !

Old Song.

WHILE the departure of the page afforded subject for the conversation which we have detailed in our last chapter, the late favourite was far advanced on his solitary journey, without well knowing what was its object, or what was likely to be its end. He had rowed the skiff in which he left the castle to the side of the lake most distant from the village, with the desire of escaping from the notice of the inhabitants. His pride whispered that he would be, in his discarded state, only the subject of their wonder and compassion ; and his generosity told him that any mark of sympathy which his situation should excite might be unfavourably reported at the castle. A trifling incident convinced him he had little to fear for his friends on the latter score. He was met by a young man some years older than himself, who had on former occasions been but too happy to be permitted to share in his sports in the subordinate character of his assistant. Ralph Fisher approached to greet him with all the alacrity of an humble friend.

'What, Master Roland, abroad on this side, and without either hawk or hound ?'

'Hawk or hound,' said Roland, 'I will never perhaps halloo to again. I have been dismissed—that is, I have left the castle.'

Ralph was surprised. 'What! you are to pass into the knight's service, and take the black-jack and the lance ?'

'Indeed,' replied Roland Grème, 'I am not ; I am now leaving the service of Avenel for ever.'

'And whither are you going then ?' said the young peasant.

'Nay, that is a question which it craves time to answer : I

have that matter to determine yet,' replied the disgraced favourite.

'Nay, nay,' said Ralph, 'I warrant you it is the same to you which way you go: my lady would not dismiss you till she had put some lining into the pouches of your doublet.'

'Sordid slave!' said Roland Græme, 'dost thou think I would have accepted a boon from one who was giving me over a prey to detraction and to ruin, at the instigation of a canting priest and a meddling serving-woman? The bread that I had bought with such an alms would have choked me at the first mouthful.'

Ralph looked at his quondam friend with an air of wonder not unminged with contempt. 'Well,' he said at length, 'no occasion for passion — each man knows his own stomach best; but, were I on a black moor at this time of day, not knowing whither I was going, I should be glad to have a broad piece or two in my pouch, come by them as I could. But perhaps you will go with me to my father's — that is, for a night, for to-morrow we expect my uncle Menelaus and all his folk; but, as I said, for one night —'

The cold-blooded limitation of the offered shelter to one night only, and that tendered most unwillingly, offended the pride of the discarded favourite.

'I would rather sleep on the fresh heather, as I have done many a night on less occasion,' said Roland Græme, 'than in the smoky arrest of your rather than smells of peat-smoke and usquebaugh in a beggar's inn.'

'You may choose, if you are so nice,' replied Ralph Fisher; 'you may be glad to smell a peat-fire, and usquebaugh too, if you journey long in the fashion you propose. You might have said "God-a-mercy for your proffer," though; it is not every one will put themselves in the way of ill-will by harbouring a discarded serving-man.'

'Ralph,' said Roland Græme, 'I would pray you to remember that I have switched you before now, and this is the same riding-wand which you have tasted.'

Ralph, who was a thickset clownish figure, arrived at his full strength, and conscious of the most complete personal superiority, laughed contemptuously at the threats of the slight-made stripling.

'It may be the same wand,' he said, 'but not the same hand; and that is as good rhyme as if it were in a ballad. Look you, my lady's page that was, when your switch was up, it was no

fear of you, but of your betters, that kept mine down ; and I wot not what hinders me from clearing old scores with this hazel rung, and showing you it was your lady's livery-coat which I spared, and not your flesh and blood, Master Roland.'

In the midst of his rage, Roland Grème was just wise enough to see that, by continuing this altercation, he would subject himself to very rude treatment from the boor, who was so much older and stronger than himself ; and while his antagonist, with a sort of jeering laugh of defiance, seemed to provoke the contest, he felt the full bitterness of his own degraded condition, and burst into a passion of tears, which he in vain endeavoured to conceal with both his hands.

Even the rough churl was moved with the distress of his quondam companion.

'Nay, Master Roland,' he said, 'I did but as 't were jest with thee ; I would not harm thee, man, were it but for old acquaintance sake. But ever look to a man's inches ere you talk of switching ; why, thine arm, man, is but like a spindle compared to mine. But hark, I hear old Adam Woodcock hallooing to his hawk. Come along, man, we will have a merry afternoon, and go jollily to my father's, in spite of the peat-smoke and usquebaugh to boot. Maybe we may put you into some honest way of winning your bread, though it's hard to come by in these broken times.'

The unfortunate page made no answer, nor did he withdraw his hands from his face, and Fisher continued in what he imagined a suitable tone of comfort.

'Why, man, when you were my lady's minion, men held you proud, and some thought you a Papist, and I wot not what ; and so, now that you have no one to bear you out, you must be companionable and hearty, and wait on the minister's examinations, and put these things out of folks' head ; and if he says you are in fault, you must jouk your head to the stream ; and if a gentleman, or a gentleman's gentleman, give you a rough word, or a light blow, you must only say, "Thank you for dusting my doublet," or the like, as I have done by you. But hark to Woodcock's whistle again. Come, and I will teach you all the trick on 't as we go on.'

'I thank you,' said Roland Grème, endeavouring to assume an air of indifference and of superiority ; 'but I have another path before me, and were it otherwise, I could not tread in yours.'

'Very true, Master Roland,' replied the clown ; 'and every

man knows his own matters best, and so I will not keep you from the path, as you say. Give us a grip of your hand, man, for auld lang syne. What! not clap palms ere we part? — well, so be it — a wilful man will have his way, and so farewell, and the blessing of the morning to you.'

'Good-morrow — good-morrow,' said Roland, hastily; and the clown walked lightly off, whistling as he went, and glad, apparently, to be rid of an acquaintance whose claims might be troublesome, and who had no longer the means to be serviceable to him.

Roland Grieme compelled himself to walk on while they were within sight of each other, that his former intimate might not augur any vacillation of purpose, or uncertainty of object, from his remaining on the same spot; but the effort was a painful one. He seemed stunned, as it were, and giddy; the earth on which he stood felt as if unsound, and quaking under his feet like the surface of a bog; and he had once or twice nearly fallen, though the path he trode was of firm greensward. He kept resolutely moving forward, in spite of the internal agitation to which these symptoms belonged, until the distant form of his acquaintance disappeared behind the slope of a hill, when his heart failed at once; and, sitting down on the turf, remote from human ken, he gave way to the natural expressions of wounded pride, grief, and fear, and wept with unrestrained profusion and unqualified bitterness.

When the first violent paroxysm of his feelings had subsided, the deserted and friendless youth felt that mental relief which usually follows such discharges of sorrow. The tears continued to chase each other down his cheeks, but they were no longer accompanied by the same sense of desolation: an afflicting yet milder sentiment was awakened in his mind by the recollection of his benefactress, of the unwearied kindness which had attached her to him, in spite of many acts of provoking petulance, now recollected as offences of a deep dye, which had protected him against the machinations of others, as well as against the consequences of his own folly, and would have continued to do so, had not the excess of his presumption compelled her to withdraw her protection.

'Whatever indignity I have borne,' he said, 'has been the just reward of my own ingratitude. And have I done well to accept the hospitality, the more than maternal kindness, of my protectress, yet to detain from her the knowledge of my religion? But she shall know that a Catholic has as much gratitude as

a Puritan ; that I have been thoughtless, but not wicked ; that in my wildest moments I have loved, respected, and honoured her ; and that the orphan boy might indeed be heedless, but was never ungrateful !'

He turned, as these thoughts passed through his mind, and began hastily to retread his footsteps towards the castle. But he checked the first eagerness of his repentant haste when he reflected on the scorn and contempt with which the family were likely to see the return of the fugitive, humbled, as they must necessarily suppose him, into a supplicant, who requested pardon for his fault, and permission to return to his service. He slackened his pace, but he stood not still.

'I care not,' he resolutely determined ; 'let them wink, point, nod, sneer, speak of the conceit which is humbled, of the pride which has had a fall — I care not ; it is a penance due to my folly, and I will endure it with patience. But if she also, my benefactress — if she also should think me sordid and weak-spirited enough to beg, not for her pardon alone, but for a renewal of the advantages which I derived from her favour — her suspicion of my meanness I cannot — I will not brook.'

He stood still, and his pride, rallying with constitutional obstinacy against his more just feeling, urged that he would incur the scorn of the Lady of Avenel rather than obtain her favour by following the course which the first ardour of his repentant feelings had dictated to him.

'If I had but some plausible pretext,' he thought — 'some ostensible reason for my return, some excuse to allege which might show I came not as a degraded supplicant or a discarded menial, I might go thither ; but as I am, I cannot : my heart would leap from its place and burst.'

As these thoughts swept through his mind, something passed in the air so near him as to dazzle his eyes, and almost to brush the plume in his cap. He looked up — it was the favourite falcon of Sir Halbert, which, flying around his head, seemed to claim his attention, as that of a well-known friend. Roland extended his arm, and gave the accustomed whoop, and the falcon instantly settled on his wrist, and began to prune itself, glancing at the youth from time to time an acute and brilliant beam of its hazel eye, which seemed to ask why he caressed it not with his usual fondness.

'Ah, Diamond !' he said, as if the bird understood him, 'thou and I must be strangers henceforward. Many a gallant stoop have I seen thee make, and many a brave heron strike down ;

but that is all gone and over, and there is no hawking more for me !'

'And why not, Master Roland,' said Adam Woodcock, the falconer, who came at that instant from behind a few alder bushes which had concealed him from view — 'why should there be no more hawking for you ? Why, man, what were our life without our sports ? 'Thou know'st the jolly old song —

And rather would Allan in dungeon lie,
Than live at large where the falcon cannot fly ;
And Allan would rather lie in Sexton's pound,
Than live where he follow'd not the merry hawk and bound.'

The voice of the falconer was hearty and friendly, and the tone in which he half-sung, half-recited his rude ballad implied honest frankness and cordiality. But remembrance of their quarrel, and its consequences, embarrassed Roland, and prevented his reply. The falconer saw his hesitation, and guessed the cause.

'What now,' said he, 'Master Roland ? do you, who are half an Englishman, think that I, who am a whole one, would keep up anger against you, and you in distress ? 'That were like some of the Scots — my master's reverence always excepted — who can be fair and false, and wait their time, and keep their mind, as they say, to themselves, and touch pot and flagon with you, and hunt and hawk with you, and, after all, when time serves, pay off some old feud with the point of the dagger. Canny Yorkshire has no memory for such old sores. Why, man, and you had hit me a rough blow, maybe I would rather have taken it from you than a rough word from another ; for you have a good notion of falconry, though you stand up for washing the meat for the eyases. So give us your hand, man, and bear no malice.'

Roland, though he felt his proud blood rebel at the familiarity of honest Adam's address, could not resist its down-right frankness. Covering his face with the one hand, he held out the other to the falconer, and returned with readiness his friendly grasp.

'Why, this is hearty now,' said Woodcock ; 'I always said you had a kind heart, though you have a spice of the devil in your disposition, that is certain. I came this way with the falcon on purpose to find you, and yon half-bred lubbard told me which way you took flight. You ever thought too much of that kestrel-kite, Master Roland, and he knows nought of

sport, after all, but what he caught from you. I saw how it had been betwixt you, and I sent him out of my company with a wanion; I would rather have a riffer on my perch than a false knave at my elbow. And now, Master Roland, tell me what way wing ye?

'That is as God pleases,' replied the page, with a sigh which he could not suppress.

'Nay, man, never droop a feather for being cast off,' said the falconer; 'who knows but you may soar the better and fairer flight for all this yet? Look at Diamond there; 't is a noble bird, and shows gallantly with his hood and bells and jesses; but there is many a wild falcon in Norway that would not change properties with him. And that is what I would say of you. You are no longer my lady's page, and you will not clothe so fair, or feed so well, or sleep so soft, or show so gallant. What? all that? if you are not her page, you are your own man, and may go where you will, without minding whoop or whistle. The worst is the loss of the sport, but who knows what you may come to? They say that Sir Halbert himself — I speak with reverence — was once glad to be the abbot's forester, and now he has hounds and hawks of his own, and Adam Woodcock for a falconer to the boot.'

'You are right, and say well, Adam,' answered the youth, the blood mantling in his cheeks: 'the falcon will soar higher without his bells than with them, though the bells be made of silver.'

'That is cheerily spoken,' replied the falconer; 'and whither now?'

'I thought of going to the Abbey of Kennaquhair,' answered Roland Graeme, 'to ask the counsel of Father Ambrose.'

'And joy go with you,' said the falconer, 'though it is likely you may find the old monks in some sorrow: they say the commons are threatening to turn them out of their cells, and make a devil's mass of it in the old church, thinking they have forborne that sport too long; and troth I am clear of the same opinion.'

'Then will Father Ambrose be the better of having a friend beside him!' said the page, manfully.

'Ay, but, my young fearnought,' replied the falconer, 'the friend will scarce be the better of being beside Father Ambrose: he may come by the redder's lick, and that is ever the worst of the battle.'

'I care not for that,' said the page; 'the dread of a lick

should not hold me back ; but I fear I may bring trouble between the brothers by visiting Father Ambrose. I will tarry to-night at St. Cuthbert's cell, where the old priest will give me a night's shelter ; and I will send to Father Ambrose to ask his advice before I go down to the convent.'

'By Our Lady,' said the falconer, 'and that is a likely plan ! And now,' he continued, exchanging his frankness of manner for a sort of awkward embarrassment, as if he had somewhat to say that he had no ready means to bring out — 'and now, you wot well that I wear a pouch for my hawks' meat,' and so forth, but wot you what it is lined with, Master Roland ?'

'With leather, to be sure,' replied Roland, somewhat surprised at the hesitation with which Adam Woodcock asked a question apparently so simple.

'With leather, lad ?' said Woodcock ; 'ay, and with silver to the boot of that. See here,' he said, showing a secret slit in the lining of his bag of office — here they are, thirty good Harry groats as ever were struck in bluff old Hal's time, and ten of them are right heartily at your service ; and now the murder is out.'

Roland's first idea was to refuse this assistance ; but he recollected the vows of humility which he had just taken upon him, and it occurred that this was the opportunity to put his new-formed resolution to the test. Assuming a strong command of himself, he answered Adam Woodcock with as much frankness as his nature permitted him to wear, in doing what was so contrary to his inclinations, that he accepted thankfully of his kind offer, while, to soothe his own reviving pride, he could not help adding, 'He hoped soon to requite the obligation.'

'That as you list — that as you list, young man,' said the falconer, with glee, counting out and delivering to his young friend the supply he had so generously offered, and then adding with great cheerfulness — 'Now you may go through the world ; for he that can back a horse, wind a horn, halloo a greyhound, fly a hawk, and play at sword and buckler, with a whole pair of shoes, a green jacket, and ten lily-white groats in his pouch, may bid Father Care hang himself in his own jesses. Farewell, and God be with you !'

So saying, and as if desirous to avoid the thanks of his companion, he turned hastily round, and left Roland Græme to pursue his journey alone.

¹ See Bag for Hawks' Meat. Note 2.

CHAPTER VIII

The sacred tapers' lights are gone,
Grey moss has clad the altar stone,
The holy image is o'erthrown,
The bell has ceased to toll.
The long ribb'd aisles are burst and shrunk,
The holy shrines to ruin sunk,
Departed is the pious monk,
God's blessing on his soul !

Rediviva.

THE cell of St. Cuthbert, as it was called, marked, or was supposed to mark, one of those resting-places which that venerable saint was pleased to assign to his monks, when his convent, being driven from Lindisfern by the Danes, became a peripatetic society of religionists, and, bearing their patron's body on their shoulders, transported him from place to place through Scotland and the borders of England, until he was pleased at length to spare them the pain of carrying him farther, and to choose his ultimate place of rest in the lordly towers of Durham. The odour of his sanctity remained behind him at each place where he had granted the monks a transient respite from their labours ; and proud were those who could assign as his temporary resting-place any spot within their vicinity. There were few cells more celebrated and honoured than that of St. Cuthbert, to which Roland Grame now bent his way, situated considerably to the north-west of the great Abbey of Kennaquhair, on which it was dependent. In the neighbourhood were some of those recommendations which weighed with the experienced priesthood of Rome in choosing their sites for places of religion.

There was a well, possessed of some medicinal qualities, which, of course, claimed the saint for its guardian and patron, and occasionally produced some advantage to the recluse who inhabited his cell, since none could reasonably expect to benefit by the fountain who did not extend their bounty to the saint's

chaplain. A few roods of fertile land afforded the monk his plot of garden ground; an eminence well clothed with trees rose behind the cell, and sheltered it from the north and the east, while the front, opening to the south-west, looked up a wild but pleasant valley, down which wandered a lively brook, which battled with every stone that interrupted its passage.

The cell itself was rather plainly than rudely constructed — a low Gothic building with two small apartments, one of which served the priest for his dwelling-place, the other for his chapel. As there were few of the secular clergy who durst venture to reside so near the Border, the assistance of this monk in spiritual affairs had not been useless to the community while the Catholic religion retained the ascendancy, as he could marry, christen, and administer the other sacraments of the Roman Church. Of late, however, as the Protestant doctrines gained ground, he had found it convenient to live in close retirement, and to avoid, as much as possible, drawing upon himself observation or animadversion. The appearance of his habitation, however, when Roland Græme came before it in the close of the evening, plainly showed that his caution had been finally ineffectual.

The page's first movement was to knock at the door, when he observed, to his surprise, that it was open, not from being left unlatched, but because, beat off its upper hinge, it was only fastened to the door-post by the lower, and could therefore no longer perform its functions. Somewhat alarmed at this, and receiving no answer when he knocked and called, Roland began to look more at leisure upon the exterior of the little dwelling, before he ventured to enter it. The flowers, which had been trained with care against the walls, seemed to have been recently torn down, and trailed their dishonoured garlands on the earth; the latticed window was broken and dashed in. The garden, which the monk had maintained by his constant labour in the highest order and beauty, bore marks of having been lately trode down and destroyed by the hoofs of animals and the feet of men.

The sainted spring had not escaped. It was wont to rise beneath a canopy of ribbed arches, with which the devotion of elder times had secured and protected its healing waters. These arches were now almost entirely demolished, and the stones of which they were built were tumbled into the well, as if for the purpose of choking up and destroying the fountain, which, as it had shared in other days the honour of the saint,

was, in the present, doomed to partake his unpopularity. Part of the roof had been pulled down from the house itself, and an attempt had been made with crows and levers upon one of the angles, by which several large corner-stones had been forced out of their place; but the solidity of ancient masonwork had proved too great for the time or patience of the assailants, and they had relinquished their task of destruction. Such dilapidated buildings, after the lapse of years, during which nature has gradually covered the effects of violence with creeping plants and with weather-stains, exhibit, amid their decay, a melancholy beauty. But when the visible effects of violence appear raw and recent there is no feeling to mitigate the sense of devastation with which they impress the spectators; and such was now the scene on which the youthful page gazed, with the painful feelings it was qualified to excite.

When his first momentary surprise was over, Roland Gracie was at no loss to conjecture the cause of these ravages. The destruction of the Popish edifices did not take place at once throughout Scotland, but at different times, and according to the spirit which actuated the Reformed clergy, some of whom instigated their hearers to these acts of demolition, and others, with better taste and feeling, endeavoured to protect the ancient shrines, while they desired to see them purified from the objects which had attracted idolatrous devotion. From time to time, therefore, the populace of the Scottish towns and villages, when instigated either by their own feelings of abhorrence for Popish superstition or by the doctrines of the more zealous preachers, resumed the work of destruction, and exercised it upon some sequestered church, chapel, or cell, which had escaped the first burst of their indignation against the religion of Rome. In many places, the vices of the Catholic clergy, arising out of the wealth and the corruption of that tremendous hierarchy, furnished too good an apology for wreaking vengeance upon the splendid edifices which they inhabited; and of this ancient Scottish historian gives a remarkable instance.

‘Why mourn ye,’ said an aged matron, seeing the discontent of some of the citizens while a stately convent was burnt by the multitude — ‘why mourn ye for its destruction? If you knew half the flagitious wickedness which has been perpetrated within that house, you would rather bless the Divine judgment which permits not even the senseless walls that screened such profligacy any longer to cumber Christian ground!’

But although, in many instances, the destruction of the

Roman Catholic buildings might be, in the matron's way of judging, an act of justice, and in others an act of policy, there is no doubt that the humour of demolishing monuments of ancient piety and munificence, and that in a poor country like Scotland, where there was no chance of their being replaced, was both useless, mischievous, and barbarous.

In the present instance, the unpretending and quiet seclusion of the monk of St. Cuthbert's had hitherto saved him from the general wreck; but it would seem ruin had now at length reached him. Anxious to discover if he had at least escaped personal harm, Roland Græme entered the half-ruined cell.

The interior of the building was in a state which fully justified the opinion he had formed from its external injuries. The few rude utensils of the solitary's hut were broken down, and lay scattered on the floor, where it seemed as if a fire had been made with some of the fragments to destroy the rest of his property, and to consume, in particular, the rude old image of St. Cuthbert, in his episcopal habit, which lay on the hearth, like Dagon of yore, shattered with the axe and scorched with the flames, but only partially destroyed. In the little apartment which served as a chapel, the altar was overthrown, and the four huge stones of which it had been once composed lay scattered around the floor. The large stone crucifix which occupied the niche behind the altar, and fronted the suppliant while he paid his devotion there, had been pulled down, and dashed by its own weight into three fragments. There were marks of sledge-hammers on each of these; yet the image had been saved from utter demolition by the size and strength of the remaining fragments, which, though much injured, retained enough of the original sculpture to show what it had been intended to represent.¹

Roland Græme, secretly nursed in the tenets of Rome, saw with horror the profanation of the most sacred emblem, according to his creed, of our holy religion.

'It is the badge of our redemption,' he said, 'which the felons have dared to violate; would to God my weak strength were able to replace it — my humble reverence to atone for the sacrilege!'

He stooped to the task he first meditated, and with a sudden, and to himself almost an incredible exertion of power he lifted up the one extremity of the lower shaft of the cross, and rested it upon the edge of the large stone which served for its pedestal.

¹ See Cell of St. Cuthbert. Note 3.

Encouraged by this success, he applied his force to the other extremity, and, to his own astonishment, succeeded so far as to erect the lower end of the limb into the socket, out of which it had been forced, and to place this fragment of the image upright.

While he was employed in this labour, or rather at the very moment when he had accomplished the elevation of the fragment, a voice, in thrilling and well-known accents, spoke behind him these words : ' Well done, thou good and faithful servant ! Thus would I again meet the child of my love — the hope of my aged eyes.'

Roland turned round in astonishment, and the tall commanding form of Magdalen Græme stood beside him. She was arrayed in a sort of loose habit, in form like that worn by penitents in Catholic countries, but black in colour, and approaching as near to a pilgrim's cloak as it was safe to wear in a country where the suspicion of Catholic devotion in many places endangered the safety of those who were suspected of attachment to the ancient faith. Roland Græme threw himself at her feet. She raised and embraced him, with affection indeed, but not unmixed with gravity which amounted almost to sternness.

'Thou hast kept well,' she said, 'the bird in thy bosom.' As a boy, as a youth, thou hast held fast thy faith amongst heretics : thou hast kept thy secret and mine own amongst thine enemies. I wept when I parted from you — I, who seldom weep, then shed tears, less for thy death than for thy spiritual danger. I dared not even see thee to bid thee a last farewell ; my grief — my swelling grief had betrayed me to these heretics. But thou hast been faithful ; down — down on thy knees before the holy sign, which evil men injure and blaspheme — down and praise saints and angels for the grace they have done thee, in preserving thee from the leprous plague which cleaves to the house in which thou wert nurtured !'

'If, my mother — so I must ever call you,' replied Græme — 'if I am returned such as thou wouldst wish me, thou must thank the care of the pious Father Ambrose, whose instructions confirmed your early precepts, and taught me at once to be faithful and to be silent.'

'Be he blessed for it !' said she — 'blessed in the cell and in the field, in the pulpit and at the altar ! The saints rain bless-

¹ An expression used by Sir Ralph Percy, slain in the battle of Hedgely Moor in 1464, when dying, to express his having preserved unstained his fidelity to the house of Lancaster.

ings on him! They are just, and employ his pious care to counteract the evils which his detested brother works against the realm and the church. But he knew not of thy lineage?'

'I could not myself tell him that,' answered Roland. 'I knew but darkly from your words that Sir Halbert Glendinning holds mine inheritance, and that I am of blood as noble as runs in the veins of any Scottish baron; these are things not to be forgotten, but for the explanation I must now look to you.'

'And when time suits thou shalt not look for it in vain. But men say, my son, that thou art bold and sudden; and those who bear such tempers are not lightly to be trusted with what will strongly move them.'

'Say rather, my mother,' returned Roland Græme, 'that I am laggard and cold-blooded; what patience or endurance can you require of which *he* is not capable who for years has heard his religion ridiculed and insulted, yet failed to plunge his dagger into the blasphemer's bosom!'

'Be contented, my child,' replied Magdalen Græme; 'the time, which then and even now demands patience, will soon ripen to that of effort and action; great events are on the wing, and thou — thou shalt have thy share in advancing them. Thou hast relinquished the service of the Lady of Avenel?'

'I have been dismissed from it, my mother — I have lived to be dismissed, as if I were the meanest of the train.'

'It is the better, my child,' replied she; 'thy mind will be the more hardened to undertake that which must be performed.'

'Let it be nothing, then, against the Lady of Avenel,' said the page, 'as thy look and words seem to imply. I have eaten her bread — I have experienced her favour; I will neither injure nor betray her.'

'Of that hereafter, my son,' said she; 'but learn this, that it is not for thee to capitulate in thy duty, and to say this will I do, and that will I leave undone. No, Roland! God and man will no longer abide the wickedness of this generation. Seest thou these fragments — knowest thou what they represent? — and canst thou think it is for thee to make distinctions amongst a race so accursed by Heaven that they renounce, violate, blaspheme, and destroy whatsoever we are commanded to believe in, whatsoever we are commanded to reverence?'

As she spoke, she bent her head towards the broken image, with a countenance in which strong resentment and zeal were mingled with an expression of ecstatic devotion; she raised her left hand aloft as in the act of making a vow, and thus pro-

ceeded : ' Bear witness for me, blessed symbol of our salvation — bear witness, holy saint, within whose violated temple we stand, that as it is not for vengeance of my own that my hate pursues these people, so neither, for any favour or earthly affection towards any amongst them, will I withdraw my hand from the plough, when it shall pass through the devoted furrow ! Bear witness, holy saint, once thyself a wanderer and fugitive as we are now — bear witness, Mother of Mercy, Queen of Heaven — bear witness, saints and angels ! '

In this high strain of enthusiasm she stood, raising her eyes through the fractured roof of the vault to the stars which now began to twinkle through the pale twilight, while the long grey tresses which ; down over her shoulders waved in the night-breeze, which the chasm and fractured windows admitted freely.

Roland Græme was too much awed by early habits, as well as by the mysterious import of her words, to ask for further explanation of the purpose she obscurely hinted at. Nor did she farther press him on the subject ; for, having concluded her prayer or obtestation, by clasping her hands together with solemnity, and then signing herself with the cross, she again addressed her grandson, in a tone more adapted to the ordinary business of life.

' Thou must hence,' she said, ' Roland — thou must hence, but not till morning. And now, how wilt thou shift for thy night's quarters ? Thou hast been more softly bred than when we were companions in the misty hills of Cumberland and Liddesdale.'

' I have at least preserved, my good mother, the habits which I then learned — can lie hard, feed sparingly, and think it no hardship. Since I was a wanderer with thee on the hills, I have been a hunter, and fisher, and fowler, and each of these is accustomed to sleep freely in a worse shelter than sacrilege has left us here.'

' Than sacrilege has left us here ! ' said the matron, repeating his words, and pausing on them. ' Most true, my son : and God's faithful children are now worst sheltered when they lodge in God's own house and the demesne of His blessed saints. We shall sleep cold here under the night-wind, which whistles through the breaches which heresy has made. They shall lie warmer who made them — ay, and through a long hereafter ! '

Notwithstanding the wild and singular expression of this female, she appeared to retain towards Roland Græme, in a

strong degree, that affectionate and sedulous love which women bear to their nurslings, and the children dependent on their care. It seems as if she would not permit him to do aught for himself which in former days her attention had been used to do for him, and that she considered the tall stripling before her as being equally dependent on her careful attention as when he was the orphan child who had owed all to her affectionate solicitude.

'What hast thou to eat now?' she said, as, leaving the chapel, they went into the deserted habitation of the priest; 'or what means of kindling a fire, to defend thee from this raw and inclement air? Poor child! thou hast made slight provision for a long journey; nor hast thou skill to help thyself by wit, when means are scanty. But Our Lady has placed by thy side one to whom want, in all its forms, is as familiar as plenty and splendour have formerly been. And with want, Roland, come the arts of which she is the inventor.'

With an active and officious diligence, which strangely contrasted with her late abstracted and high tone of Catholic devotion, she set about her domestic arrangements for the evening. A pouch, which was hidden under her garment, produced a flint and steel, and from the scattered fragments around (those pertaining to the image of St. Cuthbert scrupulously excepted) she obtained splinters sufficient to raise a sparkling and cheerful fire on the hearth of the deserted cell.

'And now,' she said, 'for needful food.'

'Think not of it, mother,' said Roland, 'unless you yourself feel hunger. It is a little thing for me to endure a night's abstinence, and a small atonement for the necessary transgression of the rules of the church upon which I was compelled during my stay in the castle.'

'Hunger for myself!' answered the matron. 'Know, youth, that a mother knows not hunger till that of her child is satisfied.' And with affectionate inconsistency, totally different from her usual manner, she added, 'Roland, you must not fast; you have dispensation; you are young, and to youth food and sleep are necessities not to be dispensed with. Husband your strength, my child; your sovereign, your religion, your country require it. Let age macerate by fast and vigil a body which can only suffer; let youth, in these active times, nourish the limbs and the strength which action requires.'

While she thus spoke, the scrip, which had produced the means of striking fire, furnished provision for a meal; of which

she herself scarce partook, but anxiously watched her charge, taking a pleasure, resembling that of an epicure, in each morsel which he swallowed, with a youthful appetite which abstinence had rendered unusually sharp. Roland readily obeyed her recommendations, and ate the food which she so affectionately and earnestly placed before him. But she shook her head when invited by him in return to partake of the refreshment her own cares had furnished; and when his solicitude became more pressing, she refused him in a loftier tone of rejection.

'Young man,' she said, 'you know not to whom, or of what, you speak. They to whom Heaven declares its purpose must merit its communication by mortifying the senses; they have that within which requires not the superfluity of earthly nutriment, which is necessary to those who are without the sphere of the Vision. To them the watch spent in prayer is a refreshing slumber, and the sense of doing the will of Heaven is a richer banquet than the tables of monarchs can spread before them! But do thou sleep soft, my son,' she said, relapsing from the tone of fanaticism into that of maternal affection and tenderness — 'do thou sleep sound while life is but young with thee, and the cares of the day can be drowned in the slumbers of the evening. Different is thy duty and mine, and as different the means by which we must qualify and strengthen ourselves to perform it. From thee is demanded strength of body — from me strength of soul.'

When she thus spoke, she prepared with ready address a pallet-couch, composed partly of the dried leaves which had once furnished a bed to the solitary, and the guests who occasionally received his hospitality, and which, neglected by the destroyers of his humble cell, had remained little disturbed in the corner allotted for them. To these her care added some of the vestures which lay torn and scattered on the floor. With a zealous hand she selected all such as appeared to have made any part of the sacerdotal vestments, laying them aside as sacred from ordinary purposes, and with the rest she made, with dexterous promptness, such a bed as a weary man might willingly stretch himself on; and during the time she was preparing it, rejected, even with acrimony, any attempt which the youth made to assist her, or any entreaty which he urged that she would accept of the place of rest for her own use. 'Sleep thou,' said she, 'Roland Græme — sleep thou — the persecuted, the disinherited orphan — the son of an ill-fated mother — sleep thou! I go to pray in the chapel beside thee.'

The manner was too enthusiastically earnest, too obstinately firm, to permit Roland Græme to dispute her will any farther. Yet he felt some shame in giving way to it. It seemed as if she had forgotten the years that had passed away since their parting ; and expected to meet, in the tall, indulged, and wilful youth whom she had recovered, the passive obedience of the child whom she had left in the Castle of Avenel. This did not fail to hurt her grandson's characteristic and constitutional pride. He obeyed, indeed, awed into submission by the sudden recurrence of former subordination, and by feelings of a notion and gratitude. Still, however, he felt the yoke.

'Have I relinquished the hawk and the hound,' he said, 'to become the pupil of her pleasure, as if I were still a child ? I, whom even my envious mates allowed to be superior in those exercises which they took most pains to acquire, and which came to me naturally, as if a knowledge of them had been my birthright ? This may not, and must not be. I will be no reclaimed sparrow-hawk, who is carried hooded on a woman's wrist, and has his quarry only shown to him when his eyes are uncovered for his flight. I will know her purpose ere it is proposed to me to aid it.'

These and other thoughts streamed through the mind of Roland Græme ; and, although wearied with the fatigues of the day, it was long ere he could compose himself to rest.

CHAPTER IX

Kneel with me — swear it — 't is not in words I trust,
Save when they're fenced with an appeal to Heaven.

Old Play.

AFTER passing the night in that sound sleep for which agitation and fatigue had prepared him, Roland was awakened by the fresh morning air, and by the beams of the rising sun. His first feeling was that of surprise; for, instead of looking forth from a turret window on the waters of the Lake of Avenel, which was the prospect his former apartment afforded, an unlatticed aperture gave him the view of the demolished garden of the banished anchorite. He sat up on his couch of leaves, and arranged in his memory, not without wonder, the singular events of the preceding day, which appeared the more surprising the more he considered them. He had lost the protectress of his youth, and, in the same day, he had recovered the guide and guardian of his childhood. The former deprivation he felt ought to be matter of unceasing regret, and it seemed as if the latter could hardly be the subject of unmixed self-congratulation. He remembered this person, who had stood to him in the relation of a mother, as equally affectionate in her attention and absolute in her authority. A singular mixture of love and fear attended upon his early remembrances as they were connected with her; and the fear that she might desire to resume the same absolute control over his motions — a fear which her conduct of yesterday did not tend much to dissipate — weighed heavily against the joy of this second meeting.

'She cannot mean,' said his rising pride, 'to lead and direct me as a pupil, when I am at the age of judging of my own actions? — this she cannot mean, or meaning it, will feel herself strangely deceived.'

A sense of gratitude towards the person against whom his heart thus rebelled checked his course of feeling. He resisted

the thoughts which involuntarily arose in his mind, as he would have resisted an actual instigation of the foul fiend; and, to aid him in his struggle, he felt for his beads. But, in his hasty departure from the Castle of Avenel, he had forgotten and left them behind him.

'This is yet worse,' he said; 'but two things I learned of her under the most deadly charge of secrecy — to tell my beads, and to conceal that I did so, and I have kept my word till now; and when she shall ask me for the rosary, I must say I have forgotten it! Do I deserve she should believe me when I say I have kept the secret of my faith, when I set so light by its symbol?'

He paced the floor in anxious agitation. In fact, his attachment to his faith was of a nature very different from that which animated the enthusiastic matron, but which, notwithstanding, it would have been his last thought to relinquish.

The early charges impressed on him by his grandmother had been instilled into a mind and memory of a character peculiarly tenacious. Child as he was, he was proud of the confidence reposed in his discretion, and resolved to show that it had not been rashly entrusted to him. At the same time, his resolution was no more than that of a child, and must, necessarily, have gradually faded away under the operation both of precept and example, during his residence at the Castle of Avenel, but for the exhortations of Father Ambrose, who, in his lay estate, had been called Edward Glendinning. This zealous monk had been apprised, by an unsigned letter placed in his hand by a pilgrim, that a child educated in the Catholic faith was now in the Castle of Avenel, perilously situated (so was the scroll expressed) as ever the three children who were cast into the fiery furnace of persecution. The letter threw upon Father Ambrose the fault should this solitary lamb, unwillingly left within the demesnes of the prowling wolf, become his final prey. There needed no farther exhortation to the monk than the idea that a soul might be endangered, and that a Catholic might become an apostate; and he made his visits more frequent than usual to the Castle of Avenel, lest, through want of the private encouragement and instruction which he always found some opportunity of dispensing, the church should lose a proselyte, and, according to the Romish creed, the devil acquire a soul.

Still these interviews were rare; and though they encouraged the solitary boy to keep his secret and hold fast his

religion, they were neither frequent nor long enough to inspire him with anything beyond a blind attachment to the observances which the priest recommended. He adhered to the forms of his religion, rather because he felt it would be dishonourable to change that of his fathers than from any rational conviction or sincere belief of its mysterious doctrines. It was a principal part of the distinction which, in his own opinion, singled him out from those with whom he lived, and gave him an additional, though an internal and concealed, reason for contemning those of the household who showed an undisguised dislike of him, and for hardening himself against the instructions of the chaplain, Henry Warden.

'The fanatic preacher,' he thought within himself, during some one of the chaplain's frequent discourses against the Church of Rome, 'he little knows whose ears are receiving his profane doctrine, and with what contempt and abhorrence they hear his blasphemies against the holy religion by which kings have been crowned and for which martyrs have died!'

But in such proud feelings of defiance of heresy, as it was termed, and of its professors, which associated the Catholic religion with a sense of generous independence, and that of the Protestants with the subjugation of his mind and temper to the direction of Mr. Warden, began and ended the faith of Roland Græme, who, independently of the pride of singularity, sought not to understand, and had no one to expound to him, the peculiarities of the tenets which he professed. His regret, therefore, at missing the rosary which had been conveyed to him through the hands of Father Ambrose was rather the shame of a soldier who has dropped his cockade, or badge of service, than that of a zealous votary who had forgotten a visible symbol of his religion.

His thoughts on the subject, however, were mortifying, and the more so from apprehension that his negligence must reach the ears of his relative. He felt it could be no one but she who had secretly transmitted these beads to Father Ambrose for his use, and that his carelessness was but an indifferent requital of her kindness.

'Nor will she omit to ask me about them,' said he to himself; 'for hers is a zeal which age cannot quell; and if she has not quitted her wont, my answer will not fail to incense her.'

While he thus communed with himself, Magdalen Græme entered the apartment. 'The blessing of the morning on your

youthful head, my son,' she said, with a solemnity of expression which thrilled the youth to the heart, so sad and earnest did the benediction flow from her lips, in a tone where devotion was blended with affection. 'And thou hast started thus early from thy couch to catch the first breath of the dawn? But it is not well, my Roland. Enjoy slumber while thou canst; the time is not far behind when the waking eye must be thy portion as well as mine.'

She uttered these words with an affectionate and anxious tone, which showed that, devotional as were the habitual exercises of her mind, the thoughts of her nursing yet bound her to earth with the cords of human affection and passion.

But she abode not long in a mood which she probably regarded as a momentary dereliction of her imaginary high calling. 'Come,' she said, 'youth, up and be doing. It is time that we leave this place.'

'And whither do we go?' said the young man; 'or what is the object of our journey?'

The matron stepped back, and gazed on him with surprise, not unmingled with displeasure.

'To what purpose such a question?' she said, 'is it not enough that I lead the way? Hast thou lived with heretics till thou hast learned to instal the vanity of thine own private judgment in place of due honour and obedience?'

'The time,' thought Roland Græme within himself, 'is already come when I must establish my freedom or be a willing thrall for ever. I feel that I must speedily look to it.'

She instantly fulfilled his foreboding, by recurring to the theme by which her thoughts seemed most constantly engrossed, although, when she pleased, no one could so perfectly disguise her religion.

'Thy beads, my son — hast thou told thy beads?'

Roland Græme coloured high; he felt the storm was approaching, but scorned to avert it by a falsehood.

'I have forgotten my rosary,' he said, 'at the Castle of Avenel.'

'Forgotten thy rosary!' she exclaimed; 'false both to religion and to natural duty, hast thou lost what was sent so far, and at such risk, a token of the truest affection, that should have been, every bead of it, as dear to thee as thine eyeballs?'

'I am grieved it should have so chanced, mother,' replied the youth, 'and much did I value the token, as coming from you. For what remains, I trust to win gold enough, when I push my

way in the world ; and till then beads of black oak, or a rosary of nuts, must serve the turn.'

'Hear him !' said his grandmother ; ' young as he is, he hath learned already the lessons of the devil's school ! 'The rosary consecrated by the Holy Father himself, and sanctified by his blessing, is but a few knobs of gold, whose value may be replaced by the wages of his profane labour, and whose virtue may be supplied by a string of hazel nuts ! This is heresy. So Henry Warden, the wolf who ravages the flock of the Shepherd, hath taught thee to speak and to think.'

'Mother,' said Roland frame, ' I am no heretic : I believe and I pray according to the rules of our church. This misfortune I regret, but I cannot amend it.'

'Thou canst repent it, though,' replied his spiritual directress — 'repent it in dust and ashes, atone for it by fasting, prayer, and penance, instead of looking on me with a countenance as light as if thou hadst lost but a button from thy cap.'

'Mother,' said Roland, 'be appeased ; I will remember my fault in the next confession which I have space and opportunity to make, and will do whatever the priest may require of me in atonement. For the heaviest fault I can do no more. But, mother,' he added, after a moment's pause, 'let me not incur your farther displeasure, if I ask whither our journey is bound, and what is its object. I am no longer a child, but a man, and at my own disposal, with down upon my chin and a sword by my side ; I will go to the end of the world with you to do your pleasure, but I owe it to myself to inquire the purpose and direction of our travels.'

'You owe it to yourself, ungrateful boy !' replied his relative, passion rapidly supplying the colour which age had long chased from her features. 'To yourself you owe nothing — you can owe nothing ; to me you owe everything — your life when an infant — your support when a child — the means of instruction and the hopes of honour ; and, sooner than thou shouldst abandon the noble cause to which I have devoted thee, would I see thee lie a corpse at my feet !'

Roland was alarmed at the vehement agitation with which she spoke, and which threatened to overpower her aged frame ; and he hastened to reply — 'I forget nothing of what I owe to you, my dearest mother ; show me how my blood can testify my gratitude, and you shall judge if I spare it. But blindfold obedience has in it as little merit as reason.'

'Saints and angels !' replied Magdalen, 'and do I hear these

words from the child of my hopes, the nursling by whose bed I have kneeled, and for whose weal I have wearied every saint in Heaven with prayers? Roland, by obedience only canst thou show thy affection and thy gratitude. What avails it that you might perchance adopt the course I propose to thee, were it to be fully explained? Thou wouldst not then follow my command, but thine own judgment; thou wouldst not do the will of Heaven, communicated through thy best friend, to whom thou owest thine all; but thou wouldst observe the blinded dictates of thine own imperfect reason. Hear me, Roland! a lot calls thee — solicits thee — demands thee — the proudest to which man can be destined, and it uses the voice of thine earliest — thy best — thine only friend. Wilt thou resist it? Then go thy way — leave me here; my hopes on earth are gone and withered. I will kneel me down before yonder profaned altar, and when the raging heretics return, they shall dye it with the blood of a martyr!

‘But, my dearest mother,’ said Roland Græme, whose early recollections of her violence were formidably renewed by these wild expressions of reckless passion, ‘I will not forsake you — I will abide with you: worlds shall not force me from your side. I will protect — I will defend you; I will live with you, and die for you!’

‘One word, my son, were worth all these; say only, “I will obey you.”’

‘Doubt it not, mother,’ replied the youth, ‘I will, and that with all my heart; only —’

‘Nay, I receive no qualifications of thy promise,’ said Magdalen Græme, catching at the word, ‘the obedience which I require is absolute; and a blessing on thee, thou darling memory of my beloved child, that thou hast power to make a promise so hard to human pride! Trust me well, that in the design in which thou dost embark thou hast for thy partners the mighty and the valiant, the power of the church, and the pride of the noble. Succeed or fail, live or die, thy name shall be among those with whom success or failure is alike glorious, death or life alike desirable. Forward then — forward! life is short, and our plan is laborious. Angels, saints, and the whole blessed host of Heaven have their eyes even now on this barren and blighted land of Scotland. What say I? On Scotland? Their eye is on *us*, Roland — on the frail woman, on the inexperienced youth, who, amidst the ruins which sacrilege hath made in the holy place, devote themselves to God’s cause, and

that of their lawful sovereign. Amen, so be it! The blessed eyes of saints and martyrs, which see our resolve, shall witness the execution; or their ears, which hear our vow, shall hear our death-groan drawn in the sacred cause!

While thus speaking, she held Roland Græme firmly with one hand, while she pointed upward with the other, to leave him, as it were, no means of protest against the obtestation to which he was thus made a party. When she had finished her appeal to Heaven, she left him no leisure for farther hesitation, or for asking any explanation of her purpose; but, passing with the same ready transition as formerly to the solicitous attentions of an anxious parent, overwhelmed him with questions concerning his residence in the Castle of Avenel, and the qualities and accomplishments he had acquired.

'It is well,' she said, when she had exhausted her inquiries: 'my gay goss-hawk' hath been well trained, and will soar high; but those who bred him will have cause to fear as well as to wonder at his flight. Let us now,' she said, 'to our morning meal, and care not though it be a scanty one. A few hours' walk will bring us to more friendly quarters.'

They broke their fast accordingly on such fragments as remained of their yesterday's provision, and immediately set out on their farther journey. Magdalen Græme led the way, with a firm and active step much beyond her years, and Roland Græme followed, pensive and anxious, and far from satisfied with the state of dependence to which he seemed again to be reduced.

'Am I for ever,' he said to himself, 'to be devoured with the desire of independence and free agency, and yet to be for ever led on by circumstances to follow the will of others?'

¹ See Note 4.

CHAPTER X

She dwelt unnoticed and alone,
Beside the springs of Dove —
A maid whom there was none to praise,
And very few to love.

WORDSWORTH.

IN the course of their journey the travellers spoke little to each other. Magdalen Grame chanted, from time to time, in a low voice, a part of some one of those beautiful old Latin hymns which belong to the Catholic service, muttered an *ave* or a *credo*, and so passed on, lost in devotional contemplation. The meditations of her grandson were more bent on mundane matters; and many a time, as a moorfowl arose from the heath and shot along the moor, uttering his bold crow of defiance, he thought of the jolly Adam Woodcock and his trusty goss-hawk; or, as they passed a thicket where the low trees and bushes were intermingled with tall fern, furze, and broom, so as to form a thick and intricate cover, his dreams were of a roebuck and a brace of gazehounds. But frequently his mind returned to the benevolent and kind mistress whom he had left behind him, offended justly, and unreconciled by any effort of his.

‘My step would be lighter,’ he thought, ‘and so would my heart, could I but have returned to see her for one instant, and to say, “Lady, the orphan boy was wild, but not ungrateful!”’

Travelling in these divers moods, about the hour of noon they reached a small straggling village, in which, as usual, were seen one or two of those predominating towers, or peel-houses, which, for reasons of defence elsewhere detailed, were at that time to be found in every Border hamlet. A brook flowed beside the village, and watered the valley in which it stood. There was also a mansion at the end of the village and a little way separated from it, much dilapidated and in very bad order, but appearing to have been the abode of persons of some consideration. The situation was agreeable, being an angle formed

by the stream, bearing three or four large sycamore-trees, which were in full leaf, and served to relieve the dark appearance of the mansion, which was built of a deep-red stone. The house itself was a large one, but was now obviously too big for the inmates; several windows were built up, especially those which opened from the lower story; others were blockaded in a less substantial manner. The court before the door, which had once been defended with a species of low outer wall, now ruinous, was paved, but the stones were completely covered with long grey nettles, thistles, and other weeds, which, shooting up betwixt the flags, had displaced many of them from their level. Even matters demanding more peremptory attention had been left neglected, in a manner which argued sloth or poverty in the extreme. The stream, undermining a part of the bank near an angle of the ruinous wall, had brought it down, with a corner turret, the ruins of which lay in the bed of the river. The current, interrupted by the ruins which it had overthrown, and turned yet nearer to the site of the tower, had greatly enlarged the breach it had made, and was in the process of undermining the ground on which the house itself stood, unless it were speedily protected by sufficient bulwarks.

All this attracted Roland Græme's observation, as they approached the dwelling by a winding path, which gave them, at intervals, a view of it from different points.

'If we go to yonder house,' he said to his mother, 'I trust it is but for a short visit. It looks as if two rainy days from the north-west would send the whole into the brook.'

'You see but with the eyes of the body,' said the old woman: 'God will defend His own, though it be forsaken and despised of men. Better to dwell on the sand, under His law, than fly to the rock of human trust.'

As she thus spoke, they entered the court before the old mansion, and Roland could observe that the front of it had formerly been considerably ornamented with carved work, in the same dark-coloured freestone of which it was built. But all these ornaments had been broken down and destroyed, and only the shattered vestiges of niches and entablatures now strewed the place which they had once occupied. The larger entrance in front was walled up, but a little footpath, which, from its appearance, seemed to be rarely trodden, led to a small wicket, defended by a door well clenched with iron-headed nails, at which Magdalen Græme knocked three times, pausing

betwixt each knock, until she heard an answering tap from within. At the last knock, the wicket was opened by a pale thin female, who said, '*Benedicti qui veniunt in nomine Domini.*' They entered, and the portress hastily shut behind them the wicket, and made fast the massive fastenings by which it was secured.

The female led the way through a narrow entrance, into a vestibule of some extent, paved with stone, and having benches of the same solid material ranged around. At the upper end was an oriel window, but some of the intervals formed by the stone shafts and mullions were blocked up, so that the apartment was very gloomy.

Here they stopped, and the mistress of the mansion, for such she was, embraced Magdalen Grame, and greeting her by the title of sister, kissed her, with much solemnity, on either side of the face.

'The blessing of Our Lady be upon you, my sister,' were her next words; and they left no doubt upon Roland's mind respecting the religion of their hostess, even if he could have suspected his venerable and zealous guide of resting elsewhere than in the habitation of an orthodox Catholic. They spoke together a few words in private, during which he had leisure to remark more particularly the appearance of his grandmother's friend.

Her age might be betwixt fifty and sixty; her looks had a mixture of melancholy and unhappiness that bordered on discontent, and obscured the remains of beauty which age had still left on her features. Her dress was of the plainest and most ordinary description, of a dark colour, and, like Magdalen Grame's, something approaching to a religious habit. Strict neatness and cleanliness of person seemed to intimate that, if poor, she was not reduced to squalid or half-broken distress, and that she was still sufficiently attached to life to retain a taste for its decencies, if not its elegancies. Her manner, as well as her features and appearance, argued an original condition and education far above the meanness of her present appearance. In short, the whole figure was such as to excite the idea, 'That female must have had a history worth knowing.' While Roland Grame was making this very reflection, the whispers of the two females ceased, and the mistress of the mansion, approaching him, looked on his face and person with much attention, and, as it seemed, some interest.

'This, then,' she said, addressing his relative, 'is the child of thine unhappy daughter, Sister Magdalen; and him, the only shoot from your ancient tree, you are willing to devote to the good cause!'

'Yes, by the rood,' answered Magdalen Grame, in her usual tone of resolved determination, 'to the good cause I devote him, flesh and fell, sinew and limb, body and soul!'

'Thou art a happy woman, Sister Magdalen,' answered her companion, 'that, lifted so high above human affection and human feeling, thou canst bind such a victim to the horns of the altar. Had I been called to make such sacrifice — to plunge a youth so young and fair into the plots and bloodthirsty dealings of the time, not the patriarch Abraham, when he led Isaac up the mountain, would have rendered more melancholy obedience.'

She then continued to look at Roland with a mournful aspect of compassion, until the intentness of her gaze occasioned his colour to rise, and he was about to move out of its influence, when he was stopped by his grandmother with one hand, while with the other she divided the hair upon his forehead, which was now crimson with bashfulness, while she added, with a mixture of proud affection and firm resolution — 'Ay, look at him well, my sister, for on a fairer face thine eye never rested. I too, when I first saw him, after a long separation, felt as the worldly feel, and was half shaken in my purpose. But no wind can tear a leaf from the withered tree which has long been stripped of its foliage, and no mere human casualty can awaken the mortal feelings which have long slept in the calm of devotion.'

While the old woman thus spoke, her manner gave the lie to her assertions, for the tears rose to her eyes while she added, 'But the fairer and the more spotless the victim, is it not, my sister, the more worthy of acceptance?' She seemed glad to escape from the sensations which agitated her, and instantly added, 'He will escape, my sister: there will be a ram caught in the thicket, and the hand of our revolted brethren shall not be on the youthful Joseph. Heaven can defend its own rights, even by means of babes and sucklings, of women and beardless boys.'

'Heaven hath left us,' said the other female: 'for our sins and our fathers' the succours of the blessed saints have abandoned this accursed land. We may win the crown of martyrdom, but not that of earthly triumph. One, too, whose prudence

was at this deep crisis so indispensable, has been called to a better world. The Abbot Eustatius is no more.'

'May his soul have mercy!' said Magdalen Græme, 'and may Heaven, too, have mercy upon us, who linger behind in this bloody land! His loss is indeed a perilous blow to our enterprise; for who remains behind possessing his far-fetched experience, his self-devoted zeal, his consummate wisdom, and his undaunted courage! He hath fallen with the church's standard in his hand, but God will raise up another to lift the blessed banner. Whom have the chapter elected in his room?'

'It is rumoured no one of the few remaining brethren dare accept the office. The heretics have sworn that they will permit no future election, and will heavily punish any attempt to create a new abbot of St. Mary's. *Conjuraverunt inter se principes, dicentes, Projiciamus laqueos ejus.*'

'*Quousque, Domine?*' ejaculated Magdalen. 'This, my sister, were indeed a perilous and fatal breach in our band; but I am firm in my belief that another will arise in the place of him so untimely removed. Where is thy daughter Catherine?'

'In the parlour,' answered the matron, 'but ——' She looked at Roland Græme, and muttered something in the ear of her friend.

'Fear it not,' answered Magdalen Græme, 'it is both lawful and necessary; fear nothing from him: I would he were as well grounded in the faith by which alone comes safety as he is free from thought, deed, or speech of villainy. Therein is the heretics' discipline to be commended, my sister, that they train up their youth in strong morality, and choke up every inlet to youthful folly.'

'It is but a cleansing of the outside of the cup,' answered her friend — 'a whitening of the sepulchre; but he shall see Catherine, since you, sister, judge it safe and meet. Follow us, youth,' she added, and led the way from the apartment with her friend. These were the only words which the matron had addressed to Roland Græme, who obeyed them in silence. As they paced through several winding passages and waste apartments with a very slow step, the young page had leisure to make some reflections on his situation — reflections of a nature which his ardent temper considered as specially disagreeable. It seemed he had now got two mistresses, or tutoresses, instead of one, both elderly women, and both, it would seem, in league to direct his motions according to their own pleasure, and for

the accomplishment of plans to which he was no party. This, he thought, was too much; arguing, reasonably enough, that whatever right his grandmother and benefactress had to guide his motions, she was neither entitled to transfer her authority or to divide it with another, who seemed to assume, without ceremony, the same tone of absolute command over him.

'But it shall not long continue thus,' thought Roland; 'I will not be all my life the slave of a woman's whistle, to go when she bids, and come when she calls. No, by St. Andrew! the hand that can hold the lance is above the control of the distaff. I will leave them the slipped collar in their hands on the first opportunity, and let them execute their own devices by their own proper force. It may save them both from peril, for I guess what they meditate is not likely to prove either safe or easy: the Earl of Murray and his heresy are too well rooted to be grubbed up by two old women.'

As he thus resolved, they entered a low room, in which a third female was seated. This apartment was the first he had observed in the mansion which was furnished with moveable seats, and with a wooden table, over which was laid a piece of tapestry. A carpet was spread on the floor, there was a grate in the chimney, and, in brief, the apartment had the air of being habitable and inhabited.

But Roland's eyes found better employment than to make observations on the accommodations of the chamber; for this second female inhabitant of the mansion seemed something very different from anything he had yet seen there. At his first entry she had greeted with a silent and low obeisance the two aged matrons, then glancing her eyes towards Roland, she adjusted a veil which hung back over her shoulders so as to bring it over her face — an operation which she performed with much modesty, but without either affected haste or embarrassed timidity.

During this manœuvre, Roland had time to observe that the face was that of a girl apparently not much past sixteen, and that the eyes were at once soft and brilliant. To these very favourable observations was added the certainty that the fair object to whom they referred possessed an excellent shape, bordering perhaps on *embonpoint*, and therefore rather that of a Hebe than of a sylph, but beautifully formed, and shown to great advantage by the close jacket and petticoat which she wore after a foreign fashion, the last not quite long

enough to conceal a very pretty foot, which rested on a bar of the table at which she sate; her round arms and taper fingers very busily employed in repairing the piece of tapestry which was spread on it, which exhibited several deplorable fissures, enough to demand the utmost skill of the most expert seamstress.

It is to be remarked, that it was by stolen glances that Roland Græme contrived to ascertain these interesting particulars; and he thought he could once or twice, notwithstanding the texture of the veil, detect the damsel in the act of taking similar cognizance of his own person. The matrons in the meanwhile continued their separate conversation, eyeing from time to time the young people, in a manner which left Roland in no doubt that they were the subject of their conversation. At length he distinctly heard Magdalen Græme say these words — 'Nay, my sister, we must give them opportunity to speak together, and to become acquainted; they must be personally known to each other, or how shall they be able to execute what they are entrusted with?'

It seemed as if the matron, not fully satisfied with her friend's reasoning, continued to offer some objections; but they were borne down by her more dictatorial friend.

'It must be so,' she said, 'my dear sister; let us therefore go forth on the balcony to finish our conversation. And do you,' she said, addressing Roland and the girl, 'become acquainted with each other.'

With this she stepped up to the young woman, and raising her veil, discovered features which, whatever might be their ordinary complexion, were now covered with a universal blush.

'*Licetum sit*,' said Magdalen, looking at the other matron.

'*Vix licetum*,' replied the other, with reluctant and hesitating acquiescence; and again adjusting the veil of the blushing girl, she dropped it so as to shade, though not to conceal, her countenance, and whispered to her, in a tone loud enough for the page to hear, 'Remember, Catherine, who thou art, and for what destined.'

The matron then retreated with Magdalen Græme through one of the casements of the apartment, that opened on a large broad balcony, which, with its ponderous balustrade, had once run along the whole south front of the building which faced the brook, and formed a pleasant and commodious walk in the open air. It was now in some places deprived of the balustrade, in others broken and narrowed; but, ruinous as it was, could still

be used as a pleasant promenade. Here then walked the two ancient dames, busied in their private conversation ; yet not so much so but that Roland could observe the matrons, as their thin forms darkened the casement in passing or repassing before it, dart a glance into the apartment, to see how matters were going on there.

CHAPTER XI

Life hath its May, and it is mirthful then :
The woods are vocal, and the flowers all odour ;
Its very blast has mirth in 't — and the maidens,
The while they don their cloaks to skreen their kirtles,
Laugh at the rain that wets them.

Old Play.

CATHERINE was at the happy age of innocence and buoyancy of spirit when, after the first moment of embarrassment was over, a situation of awkwardness like that in which she was suddenly left to make acquaintance with a handsome youth, not even known to her by name, struck her, in spite of herself, in a ludicrous point of view. She bent her beautiful eyes upon the work with which she was busied, and with infinite gravity sate out the two first turns of the matrons upon the balcony ; but then glancing her deep blue eye a little towards Roland, and observing the embarrassment under which he laboured, now shifting on his chair, and now dangling his cap, the whole man evincing that he was perfectly at a loss how to open the conversation, she could keep her composure no longer, but, after a vain struggle, broke out into a sincere, though a very involuntary, fit of laughing, so richly accompanied by the laughter of her merry eyes, which actually glanced through the tears which the effort filled them with, and by the waving of her rich tresses, that the goddess of smiles herself never looked more lovely than Catherine at that moment. A court page would not have left her long alone in her mirth ; but Roland was country-bred, and, besides, having some jealousy, as well as bashfulness, he took it into his head that he was himself the object of her inextinguishable laughter. His endeavours to sympathise with Catherine, therefore, could carry him no farther than a forced giggle, which had more of displeasure than of mirth in it, and which so much enhanced that of the girl that it seemed to render it impossible for her ever to bring her laughter to an end, with whatever anxious pains she

laboured to do so. For every one has felt that when a paroxysm of laughter has seized him, at a misbecoming time and place, the efforts which he makes to suppress it, nay, the very sense of the impropriety of giving way to it, tend only to augment and prolong the irresistible impulse.

It was undoubtedly lucky for Catherine, as well as for Roland, that the latter did not share in the excessive mirth of the former. For seated as she was, with her back to the casement, Catherine could easily escape the observation of the two matrons during the course of their promenade; whereas Græme was so placed, with his side to the window, that his mirth, had he shared that of his companion, would have been instantly visible, and could not have failed to give offence to the personages in question. He sate, however, with some impatience, until Catherine had exhausted either her power or her desire of laughing, and was returning with good grace to the exercise of her needle, and then he observed with some dryness, that 'There seemed no great occasion to recommend to them to improve their acquaintance, as it seemed that they were already tolerably familiar.'

Catherine had an extreme desire to set off upon a fresh score, but she repressed it strongly, and fixing her eyes on her work, replied by asking his pardon, and promising to avoid future offence.

Roland had sense enough to feel that an air of offended dignity was very much misplaced, and that it was with a very different bearing he ought to meet the deep blue eyes which had borne such a hearty burden in the laughing scene. He tried, therefore, to extricate himself as well as he could from his blunder, by assuming a tone of corresponding gaiety, and requesting to know of the nymph, 'How it was her pleasure that they should proceed in improving the acquaintance which had commenced so merrily.'

'That,' she said, 'you must yourself discover; perhaps I have gone a step too far in opening our interview.'

'Suppose,' said Roland Græme, 'we should begin as in a tale-book, by asking each other's names and histories.'

'It is right well imagined,' said Catherine, 'and shows an argute judgment. Do you begin, and I will listen, and only put in a question or two at the dark parts of the story. Come, unfold then your name and history, my new acquaintance.'

'I am called Roland Græme, and that tall old woman is my grandmother.'

'And your tutoress? Good. Who are your parents?'

'They are both dead,' replied Roland.

'Ay, but who were they? You *had* parents, I presume?'

'I suppose so,' said Roland, 'but I have never been able to learn much of their history. My father was a Scottish knight, who died gallantly in his stirrups; my mother was a Grame of Heathergill in the Debateable Land: most of her family were killed when the Debateable country was burned by the Lord Maxwell and Herries of Caerlaverock.'

'Is it long ago?' said the damsel.

'Before I was born,' answered the page.

'That must be a great while since,' said she, shaking her head gravely; 'look you, I cannot weep for them.'

'It needs not,' said the youth, 'they fell with honour.'

'So much for your lineage, fair sir,' replied his companion, 'of whom I like the living specimen (a glance at the casement) far less than those that are dead. Your much honoured grandmother looks as if she could make one weep in sad earnest. And now, fair sir, for your own person; if you tell not the tale faster, it will be cut short in the middle: Mother Bridget pauses longer and longer every time she *pushes* the window, and with her there is as little mirth as in the grave of your ancestors.'

'My tale is soon told. I was introduced into the Castle of Avenel to be page to the lady of the mansion.'

'She is a strict Huguenot, is she not?' said the maiden.

'As strict as Calvin himself. But my grandmother can play the Puritan when it suits her purpose, and she had some plan of her own for quartering me in the castle; it would have failed, however, after we had remained several weeks at the hamlet, but for an unexpected master of ceremonies ——'

'And who was that?' said the girl.

'A large black dog, Wolf by name, who brought me into the castle one day in his mouth like a hurt wild duck, and presented me to the lady.'

'A most respectable introduction, truly,' said Catherine; 'and what might you learn at this same castle? I love dearly to know what my acquaintances can do at need.'

'To fly a hawk, halloo to a hound, back a horse, and wield lance, bow, and brand.'

'And to boast of all this when you have learned it,' said Catherine, 'which, in France at least, is the surest accomplishment of a page. But proceed, fair sir; how came your Huguenot lord and your no less Huguenot lady to receive

and keep in the family so perilous a person as a Catholic page !'

'Because they knew not that part of my history, which from infancy I had been taught to keep secret ; and because my grand-dame's former zealous attendance on their heretic chaplain had laid all this suspicion to sleep, most fair Calipolis,' said the page, and in so saying he edged his chair towards the seat of the fair querist.

'Nay, but keep your distance, most gallant sir,' answered the blue-eyed maiden, 'for, unless I greatly mistake, these reverend ladies will soon interrupt our amicable conference if the acquaintance they recommend shall seem to proceed beyond a certain point ; so, fair sir, be pleased to abide by your station, and reply to my questions. By what achievements did you prove the qualities of a page, which you had thus happily acquired ?'

Roland, who began to enter into the tone and spirit of the damsel's conversation, replied to her with becoming spirit.

'In no feat, fair gentlewoman, was I found inexpert, wherein there was mischief implied. I shot swans, hunted cats, frightened serving-women, chased the deer, and robbed the orchard. I say nothing of tormenting the chaplain in various ways, for that was my duty as a good Catholic.'

'Now, as I am a gentlewoman,' said Catherine, 'I think these heretics have done Catholic penance in entertaining so accomplished a serving-man ! And what, fair sir, might have been the unhappy event which deprived them of an inmate altogether so estimable ?'

'Truly, fair gentlewoman,' answered the youth, 'your real proverb says that the longest lane will have a turning, and mine was more — it was, in fine, a turning off.'

'Good !' said the merry young maiden, 'it is an apt play on the word. And what occasion was taken for so important a catastrophe ? Nay, start not for my learning, I do know the schools — in plain phrase, why were you sent from service ?'

The page shrugged his shoulders while he replied, 'A short tale is soon told, and a short horse soon curried. I made the falconer's boy taste of my switch ; the falconer threatened to make me brook his cudgel. He is a kindly clown as well as a stout, and I would rather have been cudgelled by him than any man in Christendom to choose ; but I knew not his qualities at that time, so I threatened to make him brook the stab, and my lady made me brook the "Begone" ; so adieu to the page's

office and the fair Castle of Avenel. I had not travelled far before I met my venerable parent. And so tell your tale, fair gentlewoman, for mine is done.'

'A happy grandmother,' said the maiden, 'who had the luck to find the stray page just when his mistress had slipped his leash, and a most lucky page that has jumped at once from a page to an old lady's gentleman-usher!'

'All this is nothing of your history,' answered Roland Græme, who began to be much interested in the congenial vivacity of this facetious young gentlewoman — 'tale for tale is fellow-travellers' justice.'

'Wait till we are fellow-travellers, then,' replied Catherine.

'Nay, you escape me not so,' said the page; 'if you deal not justly by me, I will call out to Dame Bridget, or whatever your dame be called, and proclaim you for a cheat.'

'You shall not need,' answered the maiden. 'My history is the counterpart of your own; the same words might almost serve, change but dress and name. I am called Catherine Seyton, and I also am an orphan.'

'Have your parents been long dead?'

'That is the only question,' said she, throwing down her fine eyes with a sudden expression of sorrow — 'that is the only question I cannot laugh at.'

'And Dame Bridget is your grandmother?'

The sudden cloud passed away like that which crosses for an instant the summer sun, and she answered, with her usual lively expression, 'Worse by twenty degrees — Dame Bridget is my maiden aunt.'

'Over God's forebode!' said Roland. 'Alas! that you have such a tale to tell! And what horror comes next?'

'Your own history, exactly. I was taken upon trial for service —'

'And turned off for pinching the duenna, or affronting my lady's waiting-woman?'

'Nay, our history varies there,' said the damsel. 'Our mistress broke up house, or had her house broke up, which is the same thing, and I am a free woman of the forest.'

'And I am as glad of it as if any one had lined my doublet with cloth of gold,' said the youth.

'I thank you for your mirth,' said she, 'but the matter is not likely to concern you.'

'Nay, but go on,' said the page, 'for you will be presently interrupted; the two good dames have been soaring yonder on

the balcony, like two old hooded crows, and their croak grows hoarser as night comes on; they will wing to roost presently. This mistress of yours, fair gentlewoman, who was she, in God's name?

'O, she has a fair name in the world,' replied Catherine Seyton. 'Few ladies kept a fairer house, or held more gentlewomen in her household; my aunt Bridget was one of her housekeepers. We never saw our mistress's blessed face, to be sure, but we heard enough of her; were up early and down late, and were kept to long prayers and light food.'

'Out upon the penurious old beldam!' said the page.

'For Heaven's sake, blaspheme not!' said the girl, with an expression of fear. 'God pardon us both! I meant no harm. I speak of our blessed St. Catherine of Sienna! — may God forgive me that I spoke so lightly, and made you do a great sin and a great blasphemy! This was her nunnery, in which there were twelve nuns and an abbess. My aunt was the abbess, till the heretics turned all adrift.'

'And where are your companions?' asked the youth.

'With the last year's snow,' answered the maiden — 'east, north, south, and west: some to France, some to Flanders, some, I fear, into the world and its pleasures. We have got permission to remain, or rather our remaining has been connived at, for my aunt has great relations among the Kerrs, and they have threatened a death-feud if any one touches us; and bow and spear are the best warrants in these times.'

'Nay, then, you sit under a sure shadow,' said the youth; 'and I suppose you wept yourself blind when St. Catherine broke up housekeeping before you had taken arles¹ in her service?'

'Hush! for Heaven's sake,' said the damsel, crossing herself, 'no more of that! But I have not quite cried my eyes out,' said she, turning them upon him, and instantly again bending them upon her work. It was one of those glances which would require the threefold plate of brass around the heart, more than it is needed by the mariners to whom Horace recommends it. Our youthful page had no defence whatever to offer.

'What say you, Catherine,' he said, 'if we two, thus strangely turned out of service at the same time, should give our two most venerable duennas the torch to hold, while we walk a merry measure with each other over the floor of this weary world?'

'A goodly proposal, truly,' said Catherine, 'and worthy the

¹ *Anglicé* — earnest money.

madcap brain of a discarded page! And what shifts does your worship propose we should live by? — by singing ballads, cutting purses, or swaggering on the highway? for there, I think, you would find your most productive exchequer.'

'Choose, you proud peat!' said the page, drawing off in huge disdain at the calm and unembarrassed ridicule with which his wild proposal was received. And as he spoke the words, the casement was again darkened by the forms of the matrons; it opened, and admitted Magdalen Græme and the mother abbess, so we must now style her, into the apartment.

CHAPTER XII

Nay, hear me, brother ; I am elder, wiser,
And holier than thou. And age, and wisdom,
And holiness, have peremptory claims,
And will be listen'd to.

Old Play.

WHEN the matrons re-entered, and put an end to the conversation which we have detailed in the last chapter, Dame Magdalen Græme thus addressed her grandson and his pretty companion : ' Have you spoke together, my children ? Have you become known to each other as fellow-travellers on the same dark and dubious road, whom chance hath brought together, and who study to learn the tempers and dispositions of those by whom their perils are to be shared ? '

It was seldom the light-hearted Catherine could suppress a jest, so that she often spoke when she would have acted more wisely in holding her peace.

' Your grandson admires the journey which you propose so very greatly that he was even now preparing for setting out upon it instantly.'

' This is to be too forward, Roland,' said the dame, addressing him, ' as yesterday you were over slack ; the just mean lies in obedience, which both waits for the signal to start and obeys it when given. But once again, my children, have you so perused each other's countenances that, when you meet, in whatever disguise the times may impose upon you, you may recognise each in the other the secret agent of the mighty work in which you are to be leagued ? Look at each other, know each line and lineament of each other's countenance. Learn to distinguish by the step, by the sound of the voice, by the motion of the hand, by the glance of the eye, the partner whom Heaven hath sent to aid in working its will. Wilt thou know that maiden, whensoever or wheresoever you shall again meet her, my Roland Græme ? '

As readily as truly did Roland answer in the affirmative.

'And thou, my daughter, wilt thou again remember the features of this youth?'

'Truly, mother,' replied Catherine Seyton, 'I have not seen so many men of late that I should immediately forget your grandson, though I mark not much about him that is deserving of special remembrance.'

'Join hands, then, my children,' said Magdalen Græme; but, in saying so, was interrupted by her companion, whose conventual prejudices had been gradually giving her more and more uneasiness, and who could remain acquiescent no longer.

'Nay, my good sister, you forget,' said she to Magdalen, 'Catherine is the betrothed bride of Heaven; these intimacies cannot be.'

'It is in the cause of Heaven that I command them to embrace,' said Magdalen, with the full force of her powerful voice; 'the end, sister, sanctifies the means we must use.'

'They call me lady abbess, or mother at the least, who address me,' said Dame Bridget, drawing herself up, as if offended at her friend's authoritative manner; 'the Lady of Heathergill forgets that she speaks to the abbess of St. Catherine.'

'When I was what you call me,' said Magdalen, 'you indeed were the abbess of St. Catherine; but both names are now gone, with all the rank that the world and that the church gave to them; and we are now, to the eye of human judgment, two poor, despised, oppressed women, dragging our dishonoured old age to a humble grave. But what are we in the eye of Heaven? Ministers, sent forth to work His will, in whose weakness the strength of the church shall be manifested, before whom shall be humbled the wisdom of Murray and the dark strength of Morton. And to such wouldst thou apply the narrow rules of thy cloistered seclusion? or hast thou forgotten the order which I showed thee from thy superior, subjecting thee to me in these matters?'

'On thy head, then, be the scandal and the sin,' said the abbess, sullenly.

'On mine be they both,' said Magdalen. 'I say, embrace each other, my children.'

But Catherine, aware, perhaps, how the dispute was likely to terminate, had escaped from the apartment, and so disappointed the grandson at least as much as the old matron.

'She is gone,' said the abbess, 'to provide some little re-

freshment. But it will have little savour to those who dwell in the world; for I, at least, cannot dispense with the rules to which I am vowed, because it is the will of wicked men to break down the sanctuary in which they wont to be observed.'

'It is well, my sister,' replied Magdalen, 'to pay each even the smallest tithes of mint and cummin which the church demands, and I blame not thy scrupulous observance of the rules of thine order. But they were established by the church, and for the church's benefit; and reason it is that they should give way when the salvation of the church herself is at stake.'

The abbess made no reply.

One more acquainted with human nature than the inexperienced page might have found amusement in comparing the different kinds of fanaticism which these two females exhibited. The abbess, timid, narrow-minded, and discontented, clung to ancient usages and pretensions which were ended by the Reformation, and was in adversity, as she had been in prosperity, scrupulous, weak-spirited, and bigoted; while the fiery and more lofty spirit of her companion suggested a wider field of effort, and would not be limited by ordinary rules in the extraordinary schemes which were suggested by her bold and irregular imagination. But Roland Græme, instead of tracing these peculiarities of character in the two old dames, only waited with great anxiety for the return of Catherine, expecting probably that the proposal of the fraternal embrace would be renewed, as his grandmother seemed disposed to carry matters with a high hand.

His expectations, or hopes, if we may call them so, were, however, disappointed; for, when Catherine re-entered on the summons of the abbess, and placed on the table an earthen pitcher of water, and four wooden platters, with cups of the same materials, the Dame of Heathergill, satisfied with the arbitrary mode in which she had borne down the opposition of the abbess, pursued her victory no farther—a moderation for which her grandson, in his heart, returned her but slender thanks.

In the meanwhile, Catherine continued to place upon the table the slender preparations for the meal of a recluse, which consisted almost entirely of colewort, boiled, and served up in a wooden platter, having no better seasoning than a little salt, and no better accompaniment than some coarse barley-bread in very moderate quantity. The water-pitcher already mentioned furnished the only beverage. After a Latin grace, delivered by

the abbess, the guests sat down to their spare entertainment. The simplicity of the fare appeared to produce no distaste in the females, who ate of it moderately, but with the usual appearance of appetite. But Roland Græme had been used to better cheer. Sir Halbert Glendinning, who affected even an unusual degree of nobleness in his housekeeping, maintained it in a style of genial hospitality which rivalled that of the northern barons of England. He might think, perhaps, that by doing so he acted yet more completely the part for which he was born — that of a great baron and a leader. Two bullocks and six sheep weekly were the allowance when the baron was at home, and the number was not greatly diminished during his absence. A boll of malt was weekly brewed into ale, which was used by the household at discretion. Bread was baked in proportion for the consumption of his domestics and retainers; and in this scene of plenty had Roland Græme now lived for several years. It formed a bad introduction to lukewarm greens and spring water; and probably his countenance indicated some sense of the difference, for the abbess observed, 'It would seem, my son, that the tables of the heretic baron, whom you have so long followed, are more daintily furnished than those of the suffering daughters of the church; and yet, not upon the most solemn nights of festival, when the nuns were permitted to eat their portion at mine own table, did I consider the cates which were then served up as half so delicious as these vegetables and this water, on which I prefer to feed, rather than do aught which may derogate from the strictness of my vow. It shall never be said that the mistress of this house made it a house of feasting when days of darkness and of affliction were hanging over the Holy Church, of which I am an unworthy member.'

'Well hast thou said, my sister,' replied Magdalen Græme; 'but now it is not only time to suffer in the good cause, but to act in it. And since our pilgrim's meal is finished, let us go apart to prepare for our journey to-morrow, and to advise on the manner in which these children shall be employed, and what measures we can adopt to supply their thoughtlessness and lack of discretion.'

Notwithstanding his indifferent cheer, the heart of Roland Græme bounded high at this proposal, which he doubted not would lead to another *tête-à-tête* betwixt him and the pretty novice. But he was mistaken. Catherine, it would seem, had no mind so far to indulge him; for, moved either by delicacy

or caprice, or some of those indescribable shades betwixt the one and the other with which women love to tease, and at the same time to captivate, the ruder sex, she reminded the abbess that it was necessary she should retire for an hour before vespers; and, receiving the ready and approving nod of her superior, she arose to withdraw. But, before leaving the apartment, she made obeisance to the matrons, bending herself till her hands touched her knees, and then made a lesser reverence to Roland, which consisted in a slight bend of the body and gentle depression of the head. This she performed very demurely; but the party on whom the salutation was conferred thought he could discern in her manner an arch and mischievous exultation over his secret disappointment. 'The devil take the saucy girl,' he thought in his heart, though the presence of the abbess should have repressed all such profane imaginations, 'she is as hard-hearted as the laughing hyena that the story-books tell of: she has a mind that I shall not forget her this night at least.'

The matrons now retired also, giving the page to understand that he was on no account to stir from the convent, or to show himself at the windows, the abbess assigning as a reason the readiness with which the rude heretics caught at every occasion of scandalising the religious orders.

'This is worse than the rigour of Mr. Henry Warden himself,' said the page, when he was left alone; 'for, to do him justice, however strict in requiring the most rigid attention during the time of his homilies, he left us to the freedom of our own wills afterwards; ay, and would take a share in our pastimes, too, if he thought them entirely innocent. But these old women are utterly wrapt up in gloom, mystery, and self-denial. Well, then, if I must neither stir out of the gate nor look out at window, I will at least see what the inside of the house contains that may help to pass away one's time; peradventure I may light on that blue-eyed laughter in some corner or other.'

Going, therefore, out of the chamber by the entrance opposite to that through which the two matrons had departed (for it may be readily supposed that he had no desire to intrude on *their* privacy), he wandered from one chamber to another, through the deserted edifice, seeking with boyish eagerness some source of interest or amusement. Here he passed through a long gallery, opening on either hand into the little cells of the nuns, all deserted, and deprived of the few

trifling articles of furniture which the rules of the order admitted.

'The birds are flown,' thought the page; 'but whether they will find themselves worse off in the open air than in these damp narrow cages, I leave my lady abbess and my venerable relative to settle betwixt them. I think the wild young lark whom they have left behind them would like best to sing under God's free sky.'

A winding stair, strait and narrow, as if to remind the nuns of their duties of fast and maceration, led down to a lower suite of apartments, which occupied the ground story of the house. These rooms were even more ruinous than those which he had left; for, having encountered the first fury of the assailants by whom the nunnery had been wasted, the windows had been dashed in, the doors broken down, and even the partitions betwixt the apartments in some places destroyed. As he thus stalked from desolation to desolation, and began to think of returning from so uninteresting a research to the chamber which he had left, he was surprised to hear the low of a cow very close to him. The sound was so unexpected at the time and place that Roland Græme started as if it had been the voice of a lion, and laid his hand on his dagger, while at the same moment the light and lovely form of Catherine Seyton presented itself at the door of the apartment from which the sound had issued.

'Good even to you, valiant champion!' said she; 'since the days of Guy of Warwick, never was one more worthy to encounter a dun cow.'

'Cow!' said Roland Græme, 'by my faith, I thought it had been the devil that roared so near me. Who ever heard of a convent containing a cow-house?'

'Cow and calf may come hither now,' answered Catherine, 'for we have no means to keep out either. But I advise you, kind sir, to return to the place from whence you came.'

'Not till I see your charge, fair sister,' answered Roland, and made his way into the apartment, in spite of the half-serious, half-laughing remonstrances of the girl.

The poor solitary cow, now the only severe recluse within the nunnery, was quartered in a spacious chamber, which had once been the refectory of the convent. The roof was graced with groined arches, and the wall with niches, from which the images had been pulled down. These remnants of architectural ornaments were strangely contrasted with the rude

crib constructed for the cow in one corner of the apartment, and the stack of fodder which was piled beside it for her food.'

'By my faith,' said the page, 'Crombie is more lordly lodged than any one here!'

'You had best remain with her,' said Catherine, 'and supply by your filial attentions the offspring she has had the ill-luck to lose.'

'I will remain, at least, to help you to prepare her night's lair, pretty Catherine,' said Roland, seizing upon a pitchfork.

'By no means,' said Catherine; 'for, besides that you know not in the least how to do her that service, you will bring a chiding my way, and I get enough of that in the regular course of things.'

'What! for accepting my assistance?' said the page — 'for accepting *my* assistance, who am to be your confederate in some deep matter of import? That were altogether unreasonable; and, now I think on it, tell me, if you can, what is this mighty enterprise to which I am destined?'

'Robbing a bird's nest, I should suppose,' said Catherine, 'considering the champion whom they have selected.'

'By my faith,' said the youth, 'and he that has taken a falcon's nest in the scaurs of Polmoodie has done something to brag of, my fair sister. But that is all over now: a murrain on the nest, and the eyases and their food, washed or unwashed, for it was all anon of cramming these worthless kites that I was sent upon my present travels. Save that I have met with you, pretty sister, I could eat my dagger hilt for vexation at my own folly. But, as we are to be fellow-travellers —'

'Fellow-labourers, not fellow-travellers,' answered the girl; 'for to your comfort be it known, that the lady abbess and I set out earlier than you and your respected relative to-morrow, and that I partly endure your company at present because it may be long ere we meet again.'

'By St. Andrew, but it shall not, though,' answered Roland; 'I will not hunt at all unless we are to hunt in couples.'

'I suspect, in that and in other points, we must do as we are bid,' replied the young lady. 'But hark! I hear my aunt's voice.'

The old lady entered in good earnest, and darted a severe

¹ See Nunnery of St. Bridget. Note 5.

glance at her niece, while Roland ha' the ready wit to busy himself about the halter of the cow.

'The young gentleman,' said Catherine, gravely, 'is helping me to tie the cow up faster to her stake, for I find that last night, when she put her head out of window and lowed, she alarmed the whole village; and we shall be suspected of sorcery among the heretics if they do not discover the cause of the apparition, or lose our cow if they do.'

'Relieve yourself of that fear,' said the abbess, somewhat ironically; 'the person to whom she is now sold comes for the animal presently.'

'Good-night, then, my poor companion,' said Catherine, patting the animal's shoulders; 'I hope thou hast fallen into kind hands, for my happiest hours of late have been spent in tending thee. I would I had been born to no better task!'

'Now, out upon thee, mean-spirited wench!' said the abbess; 'is that a speech worthy of the name of Seyton, or of the mouth of a sister of this house, treading the path of election; and to be spoken before a stranger youth, too! Go to my oratory, minion; there read your *Hours* till I come thither, when I will read you such a lecture as shall make you prize the blessings which you possess.'

Catherine was about to withdraw in silence, casting a half-sorrowful, half-comic glance at Roland Graeme, which seemed to say, 'You see to what your untimely visit has exposed me,' when, suddenly changing her mind, she came forward to the page, and extended her hand as she bid him good evening. Their palms had pressed each other ere the astonished matron could interfere, and Catherine had time to say, 'Forgive me, mother; it is long since we have seen a face that looked with kindness on us. Since these disorders have broken up our peaceful retreat all has been gloom and malignity. I bid this youth kindly farewell, because he has come hither in kindness, and because the odds are great that we may never again meet in this world. I guess better than he that the schemes on which you are rushing are too mighty for your management, and that you are now setting the stone a-rolling which must surely crush you in its descent. I bid farewell,' she added, 'to my fellow-victim!'

This was spoken with a tone of deep and serious feeling, altogether different from the usual levity of Catherine's manner, and plainly showed that, beneath the giddiness of extreme youth and total inexperience, there lurked in her bosom a

deeper power of sense and feeling than her conduct had hitherto expressed.

The abbess remained a moment silent after she had left the room. The proposed rebuke died on her tongue, and she appeared struck with the deep and foreboding tone in which her niece had spoken her good even. She led the way in silence to the apartment which they had formerly occupied, and where there was prepared a small refectory, as the abbess termed it, consisting of milk and barley-bread. Magdalen Graine, summoned to take share in this collation, appeared from an adjoining apartment; but Catherine was seen no more. There was little said during the hasty meal, and after it was finished Roland Graine was dismissed to the nearest cell, where some preparations had been made for his repose.

The strange circumstances in which he found himself had their usual effect in preventing slumber from hastily descending on him, and he could distinctly hear, by a low but earnest murmuring in the apartment which he had left, that the matrons continued in deep consultation to a late hour. As they separated, he heard the abbess distinctly express herself thus: 'In a word, my sister, I venerate your character and the authority with which my superiors have invested you; yet it seems to me that, ere entering on this perilous course, we should consult some of the fathers of the church.'

'And how and where are we to find a faithful bishop or abbot at whom to ask counsel? The faithful Eustatius is no more: he is withdrawn from a world of evil, and from the tyranny of heretics. May Heaven and Our Lady assoilzie him of his sins, and abridge the penance of his mortal infirmities! Where shall we find another with whom to take counsel?'

'Heaven will provide for the church,' said the abbess: 'and the faithful fathers who yet are suffered to remain in the house of Kennaquhair will proceed to elect an abbot. They will not suffer the staff to fall down, or the mitre to be unfilled, for the threats of heresy.'

'That will I learn to-morrow,' said Magdalen Graine: 'yet who now takes the office of an hour, save to partake with the spoilers in their work of plunder? To-morrow will tell us if one of the thousand saints who are sprung from the house of St. Mary's continues to look down on it in its misery. Farewell, my sister, we meet at Edinburgh.'

'*Benedicite!*' answered the abbess, and they parted.

'To Kennaquhair and to Edinburgh we bend our way.'

thought Roland Grime. 'That information have I purchased by a sleepless hour: it suits well with my purpose. At Ken-naughair I shall see Father Ambrose; at Edinburgh I shall find the means of shaping my own course through this bustling world, without burdening my affectionate relation; at Edinburgh, too, I shall see again the witching novice, with her blue eyes and her provoking smile.' He fell asleep, and it was to dream of Catherine Seyton.

CHAPTER XIII

What, Dagon up again! I thought we had hurl'd him
Down on the threshold! never more to rise.
Bring wedge and axe; and, neighbours, lend your hands,
And rive the idol into winter fagots!

Althelstane, or the Converted Dane.

ROLAND GRÆME slept long and sound, and the sun was high over the horizon when the voice of his companion summoned him to resume their pilgrimage; and when, hastily arranging his dress, he went to attend her call, the enthusiastic matron stood already at the threshold, prepared for her journey. There was in all the deportment of this remarkable woman a promptitude of execution, and a sternness of perseverance, founded on the fanaticism which she nursed so deeply, and which seemed to absorb all the ordinary purposes and feelings of mortality. One only human affection gleamed through her enthusiastic energies, like the broken glimpses of the sun through the rising clouds of a storm. It was her maternal fondness for her grandson — a fondness carried almost to the verge of dotage in circumstances where the Catholic religion was not concerned, but which gave way instantly when it chanced either to thwart or come in contact with the more settled purpose of her soul, and the more devoted duty of her life. Her life she would willingly have laid down to save the earthly object of her affection; but that object itself she was ready to hazard, and would have been willing to sacrifice, could the restoration of the Church of Rome have been purchased with his blood. Her discourse by the way, excepting on the few occasions in which her extreme love of her grandson found opportunity to display itself in anxiety for his health and accommodation, turned entirely on the duty of raising up the fallen honours of the church, and replacing a Catholic sovereign on the throne. There were times at which she hinted, though very obscurely

and distantly, that she herself was foredoomed by Heaven to perform a part in this important task ; and that she had more than mere human warranty for the zeal with which she engaged in it. But on this subject she expressed herself in such general language that it was not easy to decide whether she made any actual pretensions to a direct and supernatural call, like the celebrated Elizabeth Barto¹, commonly called the Nun of Kent ;¹ or whether she only dwelt upon the general duty which was incumbent on all Catholics of the time, and the pressure of which she felt in an extraordinary degree.

Yet, though Magdalen Grieme gave no direct intimation of her pretensions to be considered as something beyond the ordinary class of mortals, the demeanour of one or two persons amongst the travellers whom they occasionally met, as they entered the more fertile and populous part of the valley, seemed to indicate their belief in her superior attributes. It is true that two clowns, who drove before them a herd of cattle ; one or two village wenches, who seemed bound for some merry-making ; a strolling soldier, in a rusted morion ; and a wandering student, as his threadbare black cloak and his satchel of books proclaimed him, passed our travellers without observation, or with a look of contempt ; and, moreover, that two or three children, attracted by the appearance of a dress so nearly resembling that of a pilgrim, joined in hooting and calling, ' Out upon the mass-monger ! ' But one or two, who nourished in their bosoms respect for the downfallen hierarchy, casting first a timorous glance around, to see that no one observed them, hastily crossed themselves, bent their knee to Sister Magdalen, by which name they saluted her, kissed her hand, or even the hem of her dalmatique, received with humility the *benedicite* with which she repaid their obeisance ; and then starting up, and again looking timidly round to see that they had been unobserved, hastily resumed their journey. Even while within sight of persons of the prevailing faith, there were individuals bold enough, by folding their arms and bending their head, to give distant and silent intimation that they recognised Sister Magdalen, and honoured alike her person and her purpose.

She failed not to notice to her grandson these marks of honour and respect which from time to time she received. ' You see,' she said, ' my son, that the enemies have been unable altogether to suppress the good spirit, or to root out the true

¹ See Note 6.

seed. Amid heretics and schismatics, spoilers of the church's lands, and scoffers at saints and sacraments, there is left a remnant.'

'It is true, my mother,' said Roland Graeme; 'but methinks they are of a quality which can help us but little. See you not all those who wear steel at their side, and bear marks of better quality, ruffle past as they would past the meanest beggars? for those who give us any marks of sympathy are the poorest of the poor, and most outcast of the needy, who have neither bread to share with us, nor swords to defend us, nor skill to use them if they had. That poor wretch that last kneeled to you with such deep devotion, and who seemed emaciated by the touch of some wasting disease within, and the grasp of poverty without — that pale, shivering, miserable caitiff, how can he aid the great schemes you meditate?'

'Much, my son,' said the matron, with more mildness than the page perhaps expected. 'When that pious son of the church returns from the shrine of St. Ringan, whither he now travels by my counsel, and by the aid of good Catholics — when he returns healed of his wasting malady, high in health and strong in limb, will not the glory of his faithfulness, and its miraculous reward, speak louder in the ears of this besotted people of Scotland than the din which is weekly made in a thousand heretical pulpits?'

'Ay, but, mother, I fear the saint's hand is out. It is long since we have heard of a miracle performed at St. Ringan's.'

The matron made a dead pause, and, with a voice tremulous with emotion, asked, 'Art thou so unhappy as to doubt the power of the blessed saint?'

'Nay, mother,' the youth hastened to reply, 'I believe as the Holy Church commands, and doubt not St. Ringan's power of healing; but, be it said with reverence, he hath not of late showed the inclination.'

'And has this land deserved it?' said the Catholic matron, advancing hastily while she spoke, until she attained the summit of a rising ground, over which the path led, and then standing again still. 'Here,' she said, 'stood the cross, the limits of the halidome of St. Mary's — here, on this eminence, from which the eye of the holy pilgrim might first catch a view of that ancient monastery, the light of the land, the abode of saints, and the grave of monarchs. Where is now that emblem of our faith? It lies on the earth, a shapeless block, from which the broken fragments have been carried off, for the meanest

uses, till now no semblance of its original form remains. Look towards the east, my son, where the sun was wont to glitter on stately spires, from which crosses and bells have now been hurled, as if the land had been invaded once more by barbarous heathens — look at yonder battlements, of which we can, even at this distance, descry the partial demolition; and ask if this land can expect from the blessed saints, whose shrines and whose images have been profaned, any other miracles but those of vengeance? How long,' she exclaimed, looking upward — 'how long shall it be delayed?' She paused, and then resumed with enthusiastic rapidity, 'Yes, my son, all on earth is but for a period: joy and grief, triumph and desolation, succeed each other like cloud and sunshine; the vineyard shall not be forever trodden down, the gaps shall be amended, and the fruitful branches once more dressed and trimmed. Even this day — ay, even this hour, I trust to hear news of importance. Dally not — let us on; time is brief, and judgment is certain.'

She resumed the path which led to the abbey — a path which, in ancient times, was carefully marked out by posts and rails, to assist the pilgrim in his journey; these were now torn up and destroyed. A half-hour's walk placed them in front of the once splendid monastery, which, although the church was as yet entire, had not escaped the fury of the times. The long range of cells and of apartments for the use of the brethren, which occupied two sides of the great square, were almost entirely ruinous, the interior having been consumed by fire, which only the massive architecture of the outward walls had enabled them to resist. The abbot's house, which formed the third side of the square, was, though injured, still inhabited, and afforded refuge to the few brethren who yet, rather by connivance than by actual authority, were permitted to remain at Kennaquhair. Their stately offices, their pleasant gardens, the magnificent cloisters constructed for their recreation, were all dilapidated and ruinous; and some of the building materials had apparently been put into requisition by persons in the village and in the vicinity, who, formerly vassals of the monastery, had not hesitated to appropriate to themselves a part of the spoils. Roland saw fragments of Gothic pillars, richly carved, occupying the place of door-posts to the meanest huts; and here and there a mutilated statue, inverted or laid on its side, made the door-post or threshold of a wretched cow-house. The church itself was less injured than the other buildings of the monastery. But the images which had been placed in the

numerous niches of its columns and buttresses, having all fallen under the charge of idolatry, to which the superstitious devotion of the Papists had justly exposed them, had been broken and thrown down, without much regard to the preservation of the rich and airy canopies and pedestals on which they were placed; nor, if the devastation had stopped short at this point, could we have considered the preservation of these monuments of antiquity as an object to be put in the balance with the introduction of the Reformed worship.

Our pilgrims saw the demolition of these sacred and venerable representations of saints and angels — for as sacred and venerable they had been taught to consider them — with very different feelings. The antiquary may be permitted to regret the necessity of the action, but to Magdalen Græme it seemed a deed of impiety, deserving the instant vengeance of Heaven — a sentiment in which her relative joined for the moment as cordially as herself. Neither, however, gave vent to their feelings in words, and uplifted hands and eyes formed their only mode of expressing them. The page was about to approach the great eastern gate of the church, but was prevented by his guide. 'That gate,' she said, 'has long been blockaded, that the heretical rabble may not know there still exist among the brethren of St. Mary's men who dare worship where their predecessors prayed while alive, and were interred when dead; follow me this way, my son.'

Roland Græme followed accordingly; and Magdalen, casting a hasty glance to see whether they were observed (for she had learned caution from the danger of the times), commanded her grandson to knock at a little wicket which she pointed out to him. 'But knock gently,' she added, with a motion expressive of caution. After a little space, during which no answer was returned, she signed to Roland to repeat his summons for admission; and the door at length partially opening, discovered a glimpse of the thin and timid porter, by whom the duty was performed, skulking from the observation of those who stood without, but endeavouring at the same time to gain a sight of them without being himself seen. How different from the proud consciousness of dignity with which the porter of ancient days offered his important brow and his goodly person to the pilgrims who repaired to Kennaquhair! His solemn '*Intrate, mei filii*,' was exchanged for a tremulous 'You cannot enter now: the brethren are in their chambers.' But when Magdalen Græme asked, in an under tone of voice, 'Hast thou for-

gotten me, my brother?' he changed his apologetic refusal to 'Enter, my honoured sister — enter speedily, for evil eyes are upon us.'

They entered accordingly, and having waited until the porter had, with jealous haste, barred and bolted the wicket, were conducted by him through several dark and winding passages. As they walked slowly on, he spoke to the matron in a subdued voice, as if he feared to trust the very walls with the avowal which he communicated.

'Our fathers are assembled in the chapter-house, worthy sister — yes, in the chapter-house — for the election of an abbot. Ah, *benedicite*! there must be no ringing of bells — no high mass — no opening of the great gates now, that the people might see and venerate their spiritual father! Our fathers must hide themselves rather like robbers who choose a leader than godly priests who elect a mitred abbot.'

'Regard not that, my brother,' answered Magdalen Græme; 'the first successors of St. Peter himself were elected, not in sunshine, but in tempests; not in the halls of the Vatican, but in the subterranean vaults and dungeons of heathen Rome; they were not gratulated with shouts and salvos of cannon-shot and of musketry, and the display of artificial fire — no, my brother, but by the hoarse summons of lictors and prætors, who came to drag the fathers of the church to martyrdom. From such adversity was the church once raised, and by such will it now be purified. And mark me, brother! not in the proudest days of the mitred abbey was a superior ever chosen whom his office shall so much honour as *he* shall be honoured who now takes it upon him in these days of tribulation. On whom, my brother, will the choice fall?'

'On whom can it fall — or, alas! who would dare to reply to the call — save the worthy pupil of the sainted Eustatius, the good and valiant Father Ambrose?'

'I know it,' said Magdalen; 'my heart told me, long ere your lips had uttered his name. Stand forth, courageous champion, and man the fatal breach! Rise, bold and experienced pilot, and seize the helm while the tempest rages! Turn back the battle, brave raiser of the fallen standard! Wield crook and sling, noble shepherd of a scattered flock.'

'I pray you, hush, my sister!' said the porter, opening a door which led into the great church, 'the brethren will be presently here to celebrate their election with a solemn mass; I must marshal them the way to the high altar: all the

offices of this venerable house have now devolved on one poor decrepit old man.'

He left the church, and Magdalen and Roland remained alone in that great vaulted space, whose style of rich yet chaste architecture referred its origin to the early part of the 14th century, the best period of Gothic building. But the niches were stripped of their images in the inside as well as the outside of the church; and in the pell-mell havoc the tombs of warriors and of princes had been included in the demolition of the idolatrous shrines. Lances and swords of antique size, which had hung over the tombs of mighty warriors of former days, lay now strewed among relics with which the devotion of pilgrims had graced those of their peculiar saints; and the fragments of the knights and dames, which had once lain recumbent, or kneeled in an attitude of devotion, where their mortal relics were reposed, were mingled with those of the saints and angels of the Gothic chisel, which the hand of violence had sent headlong from their stations.

The most fatal symptom of the whole appeared to be that, though this violence had now been committed for many months, the fathers had lost so totally all heart and resolution that they had not adventured even upon clearing away the rubbish, or restoring the church to some decent degree of order. This might have been done without much labour. But terror had overpowered the scanty remains of a body once so powerful, and, sensible they were only suffered to remain in this ancient seat by connivance and from compassion, they did not venture upon taking any step which might be construed into an assertion of their ancient rights, contenting themselves with the secret and obscure exercise of their religious ceremonial, in as unostentatious a manner as was possible.

Two or three of the more aged brethren had sunk under the pressure of the times, and the ruins had been partly cleared away to permit their interment. One stone had been laid over Father Nicolas, which recorded of him in special that he had taken the vows during the incumbency of Abbot Ingelram, the period to which his memory so frequently recurred. Another flagstone, yet more recently deposited, covered the body of Philip the sacristan, eminent for his aquatic excursion with the phantom of Avenel; and a third, the most recent of all, bore the outline of a mitre, and the words *Hic jacet Eustatius Abbas*; for no one dared to add a word of commendation in favour of his learning and strenuous zeal for the Roman Catholic faith.

Magdalen Grème looked at and perused the brief records of these monuments successively, and paused over that of Father Eustace. 'In a good hour for thyself,' she said, 'but oh! in an evil hour for the church, wert thou called from us. Let thy spirit be with us, holy man; encourage thy successor to tread in thy footsteps; give him thy bold and inventive capacity, thy zeal, and thy discretion; even *thy* piety exceeds not his.' As she spoke, a side door, which closed a passage from the abbot's house into the church, was thrown open, that the fathers might enter the choir, and conduct to the high altar the superior whom they had elected.

In former times, this was one of the most splendid of the many pageants which the hierarchy of Rome had devised to attract the veneration of the faithful. The period during which the abbacy remained vacant was a state of mourning, or, as their emblematical phrase expressed it, of widowhood — a melancholy term, which was changed into rejoicing and triumph when a new superior was chosen. When the folding-doors were on such solemn occasions thrown open, and the new abbot appeared on the threshold in full-blown dignity, with ring and mitre, and dalmatique and crosier, his hoary standard-bearers and his juvenile dispensers of incense preceding him, and the venerable train of monks behind him, with all besides which could announce the supreme authority to which he was now raised, his appearance was a signal for the magnificent *Jubilate* to rise from the organ and music-loft, and to be joined by the corresponding bursts of *Alleluiah* from the whole assembled congregation. Now all was changed. In the midst of rubbish and desolation, seven or eight old men, bent and shaken, as much by grief and fear as by age, shrouded hastily in the proscribed dress of their order, wandered like a procession of spectres from the door which had been thrown open, up through the encumbered passage to the high altar, there to instal their elected superior a chief of ruins. It was like a band of bewildered travellers choosing a chief in the wilderness of Arabia; or a shipwrecked crew electing a captain upon the barren island on which fate has thrown them.

They who, in peaceful times, are most ambitious of authority among others, shrink from the competition at such eventful periods, when neither ease nor parade attend the possession of it, and when it gives only a painful pre-eminence both in danger and in labour, and exposes the ill-fated champion to the murmurs of his discontented associates, as well as to the first assault of

the common enemy. But he on whom the office of the abbot of St. Mary's was now conferred had a mind fitted for the situation to which he was called. Bold and enthusiastic, yet generous and forgiving; wise and skilful, yet zealous and prompt, he wanted but a better cause than the support of a decaying superstition to have raised him to the rank of a truly great man. But as the end crowns the work, it also forms the rule by which it must be ultimately judged; and those who, with sincerity and generosity, fight and fall in an evil cause, posterity can only compassionate as victims of a generous but fatal error. Amongst these we must rank Ambrosius, the last abbot of Kennaquhair, whose designs must be condemned, as their success would have riveted on Scotland the chains of antiquated superstition and spiritual tyranny; but whose talents commanded respect, and whose virtues, even from the enemies of his faith, extorted esteem.

The bearing of the new abbot served of itself to dignify a ceremonial which was deprived of all other attributes of grandeur. Conscious of the peril in which they stood, and recalling, doubtless, the better days they had seen, there hung over his brethren an appearance of mingled terror, and grief, and shame, which induced them to hurry over the office in which they were engaged, as something at once degrading and dangerous.

But not so Father Ambrose. His features, indeed, expressed a deep melancholy, as he walked up the centre aisle, amid the ruin of things which he considered as holy, but his brow was undejected, and his step firm and solemn. He seemed to think that the dominion which he was about to receive depended in no sort upon the external circumstances under which it was conferred; and if a mind so firm was accessible to sorrow or fear, it was not on his own account, but on that of the church to which he had devoted himself.

At length he stood on the broken steps of the high altar, barefooted, as was the rule, and holding in his hand his pastoral staff, for the gemmed ring and jewelled mitre had become secular spoils. No obedient vassals came, man after man, to make their homage and to offer the tribute which should provide their spiritual superior with palfrey and trappings. No bishop assisted at the solemnity, to receive into the higher ranks of the church nobility a dignitary whose voice in the legislature was as potential as his own. With hasty and maimed rites, the few remaining brethren stepped forward alternately to give

their new abbot the kiss of peace, in token of fraternal affection and spiritual homage. Mass was then hastily performed, but in such precipitation as if it had been hurried over rather to satisfy the scruples of a few youths, who were impatient to set out on a hunting party,¹ than as if it made the most solemn part of a solemn ordination. The officiating priest faltered as he spoke the service, and often looked around, as if he expected to be interrupted in the midst of his office; and the brethren listened as to that which, short as it was, they wished yet more abridged.

These symptoms of alarm increased as the ceremony proceeded, and, as it seemed, were not caused by mere apprehension alone; for, amid the pauses of the hymn, there were heard without sounds of a very different sort, beginning faintly and at a distance, but at length approaching close to the exterior of the church, and stunning with dissonant clamour those engaged in the service. The winding of horns, blown with no regard to harmony or concert; the jangling of bells, the thumping of drums, the squeaking of bagpipes, and the clash of cymbals; the shouts of a multitude, now as in laughter, now as in anger; the shrill tones of female voices, and of those of children, mingling with the deeper clamour of men, formed a Babel of sounds, which first drowned, and then awed into utter silence, the official hymns of the convent. The cause and result of this extraordinary interruption will be explained in the next chapter.

¹ See Hunting Mass. Note 7.

CHAPTER XIV

Not the wild billow, when it breaks its barrier,
Not the wild wind, escaping from its cavern,
Not the wild fiend, that mingles both together,
And pours their rage upon the ripening harvest,
Can match the wild freaks of this mirthful meeting —
Comic, yet fearful ; droll, and yet destructive.

The Conspiracy.

THE monks ceased their song, which, like that of the choristers in the legend of the Witch of Berkley, died away in a quaver of consternation ; and like a flock of chickens disturbed by the presence of the kite, they at first made a movement to disperse and fly in different directions, and then, with despair rather than hope, huddled themselves around their new abbot ; who, retaining the lofty and undimayed look which had dignified him through the whole ceremony, stood on the higher step of the altar, as if desirous to be the most conspicuous mark on which danger might discharge itself, and to save his companions by his self-devotion, since he could afford them no other protection.

Involuntarily, as it were, Magdalen Graeme and the page stepped from the station which hitherto they had occupied unnoticed, and approached to the altar, as desirous of sharing the fate which approached the monks, whatever that might be. Both bowed reverently low to the abbot ; and while Magdalen seemed about to speak, the youth, looking towards the main entrance, at which the noise now roared most loudly, and which was at the same time assailed with much knocking, laid his hand upon his dagger.

The abbot motioned to both to forbear. 'Peace, my sister,' he said, in a low tone, but which, being in a different key from the tumultuary sounds without, could be distinctly heard even amidst the tumult — 'peace,' he said, 'my sister ; let the new superior of St. Mary's himself receive and reply to the grateful

acclamations of the vassals who come to celebrate his installation. And thou, my son, forbear, I charge thee, to touch thy earthly weapon ; if it is the pleasure of our protectress that her shrine be this day desecrated by deeds of violence, and polluted by blood-shedding, let it not, I charge thee, happen through the deed of a Catholic son of the church.'

The noise and knocking at the outer gate became now every moment louder, and voices were heard impatiently demanding admittance. The abbot, with dignity, and with a step which even the emergency of danger rendered neither faltering nor precipitate, moved towards the portal, and demanded to know, in a tone of authority, who it was that disturbed their worship, and what they desired.

There was a moment's silence, and then a loud laugh from without. At length a voice replied, 'We desire entrance into the church ; and when the door is opened you will soon see who we are.'

'By whose authority do you require entrance ?' said the father.

'By authority of the right reverend Lord Abbot of Unreason,'¹ replied the voice from without ; and, from the laugh which followed, it seemed as if there was something highly ludicrous couched under this reply.

'I know not, and seek not to know, your meaning,' replied the abbot, 'since it is probably a rude one. But begone, in the name of God, and leave His servants in peace. I speak this as having lawful authority to command here.'

'Open the door,' said another rude voice, 'and we will try titles with you, sir monk, and show you a superior we must all obey.'

'Break open the doors if he dallies any longer,' said a third, 'and down with the carrion monks who would bar us of our privilege !' A general shout followed. 'Ay, ay, our privilege ! —our privilege ! Down with the doors, and with the lurdane monks if they make opposition !'

The knocking was now exchanged for blows with great hammers, to which the doors, strong as they were, must soon have given way. But the abbot, who saw resistance would be in vain, and who did not wish to incense the assailants by an attempt at offering it, besought silence earnestly, and with difficulty obtained a hearing. 'My children,' said he, 'I will save you from committing a great sin. The porter will pres-

¹ See Note 8.

ently undo the gate — he is gone to fetch the keys ; meantime, I pray you to consider with yourselves if you are in a state of mind to cross the holy threshold.'

'Tillyvalley for your Papistry !' was answered from without ; 'we are in the mood of the monks when they are merriest, and that is when they sup beef-brewis for lenten-kail. So, if your porter hath not the gout, let him come speedily, or we heave away readily. Said I well, comrades ?'

'Bravely said, and it shall be as bravely done,' said the multitude ; and had not the keys arrived at that moment, and the porter in hasty terror performed his office, throwing open the great door, the populace would have saved him the trouble. The instant he had done so, the affrighted janitor fled, like one who has drawn the bolts of a flood-gate, and expects to be overwhelmed by the rushing inundation. The monks, with one consent, had withdrawn themselves behind the abbot, who alone kept his station, about three yards from the entrance, showing no signs of fear or perturbation. His brethren, partly encouraged by his devotion, partly ashamed to desert him, and partly animated by a sense of duty, remained huddled close together at the back of their superior. There was a loud laugh and huzza when the doors were opened ; but, contrary to what might have been expected, no crowd of enraged assailants rushed into the church. On the contrary, there was a cry of 'A halt ! halt ! to order, my masters ! and let the two reverend fathers greet each other, as becoms them.'

The appearance of the crowd who were thus called to order was grotesque in the extreme. It was composed of men, women, and children, ludicrously disguised in various habits, and presenting groups equally diversified and grotesque. Here one fellow with a horse's head painted before him, and a tail behind, and the whole covered with a long foot-cloth, which was supposed to hide the body of the animal, ambled, caracoled, pranced, and plunged, as he performed the celebrated part of the hobby-horse,¹ so often alluded to in our ancient drama, and which still flourishes on the stage in the battle that concludes Bayes's tragedy. To rival the address and agility displayed by this character, another personage advanced, in the more formidable character of a huge dragon, with gilded wings, open jaws, and a scarlet tongue, cloven at the end, which made various efforts to overtake and devour a lad, dressed as the lovely Sabra, daughter of the King of Egypt, who fled before him ; while a

¹ See Note 9.

martial St. George, grotesquely armed with a goblet for a helmet and a spit for a lance, ever and anon interfered, and compelled the monster to relinquish his prey. A bear, a wolf, and one or two other wild animals, played their parts with the discretion of Snug the joiner; for the decided preference which they gave to the use of their hind legs was sufficient, without any formal annunciation, to assure the most timorous spectators that they had to do with habitual bipeds. There was a group of outlaws, with Robin Hood and Little John at their head¹ — the best representation exhibited at the time; and no great wonder, since most of the actors were, by profession, the banished men and thieves whom they presented. Other masqueraders there were, of a less marked description. Men were disguised as women, and women as men; children wore the dress of aged people, and tottered with crutch-sticks in their hands, furred gowns on their little backs, and caps on their round heads; while grandsires assumed the infantine tone as well as the dress of children. Besides these, many had their faces painted, and wore their shirts over the rest of their dress; while coloured pasteboard and ribbons furnished out decorations for others. Those who wanted all these properties, blacked their faces, and turned their jackets inside out; and thus the transmutation of the whole assembly into a set of mad grotesque mummers was at once completed.

The pause which the masqueraders made, waiting apparently for some person of the highest authority amongst them, gave those within the abbey church full time to observe all these absurdities. They were at no loss to comprehend their purpose and meaning.

Few readers can be ignorant that, at an early period, and during the plenitude of her power, the Church of Rome not only connived at, but even encouraged, such saturnalian licenses as the inhabitants of Bloomsbury and the neighbourhood had now in hand, and that the vulgar, on such occasions, were not only permitted but encouraged, by a number of gambols, sometimes puerile and vicious, sometimes immoral and profane, to indemnify themselves for the privations and penances imposed on them at other seasons. But, of all other topics for burlesque and ridicule, the rites and ceremonial of the church itself were most frequently resorted to; and, strange to say, with the approbation of the clergy themselves.

While the hierarchy flourished in full glory, they do not

¹ See Note 10.

appear to have dreaded the consequences of suffering the people to become so irreverently familiar with things sacred: they then imagined the laity to be much in the condition of a labourer's horse, which does not submit to the bridle and the whip with greater reluctance because, at rare intervals, he is allowed to frolic at large in his pasture, and fling out his heels in clumsy gambols at the master who usually drives him. But, when times changed — when doubt of the Roman Catholic doctrine, and hatred of their priesthood, had possessed the Reformed party — the clergy discovered, too late, that no small inconvenience arose from the established practice of games and merry-makings, in which they themselves, and all they held most sacred, were made the subject of ridicule. It then became obvious to duller politicians than the Romish churchmen, that the same actions have a very different tendency when done in the spirit of sarcastic insolence and hatred than when acted merely in exuberance of rude and uncontrollable spirits. They, therefore, though of the latest, endeavoured, where they had any remaining influence, to discourage the renewal of these indecorous festivities. In this particular, the Catholic clergy were joined by most of the Reformed preachers, who were more shocked at the profanity and immorality of many of these exhibitions than disposed to profit by the ridiculous light in which they placed the Church of Rome and her observances. But it was long ere these scandalous and immoral sports could be abrogated: the rude multitude continued attached to their favourite pastimes; and, both in England and Scotland, the mitre of the Catholic, the rochet of the Reformed, bishop, and the cloak and band of the Calvinistic divine, were, in turn, compelled to give place to those jocular personages, the Pope of Fools, the Boy Bishop, and the Abbot of Unreason.¹

It was the latter personage who now, in full costume, made his approach to the great door of the church of St. Mary's, accoutred in such a manner as to form a caricature, or practical parody, on the costume and attendants of the real superior, whom he came to beard on the very day of his installation, in the presence of his clergy, and in the chancel of his church. The mock dignitary was a stout-made, under-sized fellow, whose thick squab form had been rendered grotesque by a supplemental paunch, well stuffed. He wore a mitre of leather, with the front like a grenadier's cap, adorned with mock embroidery

¹ From the interesting novel entitled *Anastasia*, it seems the same burlesque ceremonies were practised in the Greek Church.

and trinkets of tin. This surmounted a visage the nose of which was the most prominent feature, being of unusual size, and at least as richly gemmed as his head-gear. His robe was of buckram, and his cope of canvas, curiously painted, and cut into open work. On one shoulder was fixed the painted figure of an owl; and he bore in the right hand his pastoral staff, and in the left a small mirror having a handle to it, thus resembling a celebrated jester, whose adventures, translated into English, were whilom extremely popular, and which may still be procured in black letter for about one sterling pound per leaf.

The attendants of this mock dignity had their proper dresses and equipage, bearing the same burlesque resemblance to the officers of the convent which their leader did to the superior. They followed their leader in regular procession, and the motley characters, which had waited his arrival, now crowded into the church in his train, shouting as they came — 'A hall — a hall! for the venerable Father Howleglas, the learned Monk of Misrule, and the Right Reverend Abbot of Unreason!'

The discordant minstrelsy of every kind renewed its din: the boys shrieked and howled, and the men laughed and hallooed, and the women giggled and screamed, and the beasts roared, and the dragon walloped and hissed, and the hobby-horse neighed, pranced, and capered, and the rest frisked and frolicked, clashing their hobnailed shoes against the pavement, till it sparkled with the marks of their energetic caprioles.

It was, in fine, a scene of ridiculous confusion, that deafened the ear, made the eyes giddy, and must have altogether stunned any indifferent spectator; the monks, whom personal apprehension and a consciousness that much of the popular enjoyment arose from the ridicule being directed against them, were, moreover, little comforted by the reflection that, bold in their disguise, the mummers who whooped and capered around them might, on slight provocation, turn their jest into earnest, or at least proceed to those practical pleasantries which at all times arise so naturally out of the frolicsome and mischievous disposition of the populace. They looked to their abbot amid the tumult, with such looks as landmen cast upon the pilot when the storm is at the highest — looks which express that they are devoid of all hope arising from their own exertions, and not very confident in any success likely to attend those of their *Palinurus*.

The abbot himself seemed at a stand; he felt no fear, but he was sensible of the danger of expressing his rising indigna-

tion, which he was scarcely able to suppress. He made a gesture with his hand as if commanding silence, which was at first only replied to by redoubled shouts, and peals of wild laughter. When, however, the same motion, and as nearly in the same manner, had been made by Howleglas, it was immediately obeyed by his riotous companions, who expected fresh food for mirth in the conversation betwixt the real and mock abbot, having no small confidence in the vulgar wit and impudence of their leader. Accordingly, they began to shout, 'To it, fathers — to it!' 'Fight monk, fight madcap: abbot against abbot is fair play, and so is reason against unreason, and malice against monkery!'

'Silence, my mates!' said Howleglas; 'cannot two learned fathers of the church hold communion together, but you must come here with your bear-garden whoop and halloo, as if you were hounding forth a mastiff upon a mad bull? I say, silence! and let this learned father and me confer touching matters affecting our mutual state and authority.'

'My children ——' said Father Ambrose.

'My children too — and happy children they are!' said his burlesque counterpart; 'many a wise child knows not its own father, and it is well they have two to choose betwixt.'

'If thou hast aught in thee, save scoffing and ribaldry,' said the real abbot, 'permit me, for thine own soul's sake, to speak a few words to these misguided men.'

'Aught in me but scoffing, sayest thou?' retorted the Abbot of Unreason; 'why, reverend brother, I have, all that becomes mine office at this time a-day: I have beef, ale, and brandy-wine, with other condiments not worth mentioning; and for speaking, man — why, speak away, and we will have turn about, like honest fellows.'

During this discussion the wrath of Magdalen Græme had risen to the uttermost; she approached the abbot, and, placing herself by his side, said in a low and yet distinct tone — 'Wake and arouse thee, father; the sword of St. Peter is in thy hand — strike and avenge St. Peter's patrimony! Bind them in the chains, which, being riveted by the church on earth, are riveted in Heaven ——'

'Peace, sister!' said the abbot; 'let not their madness destroy our discretion — I pray thee, peace, and let me do mine office. It is the first, peradventure it may be the last, time I shall be called on to discharge it.'

'Nay, my holy brother!' said Howleglas, 'I rede you, take

the holy sister's advice : never throve convent without woman's counsel.'

'Peace, vain man!' said the abbot; 'and you, my brethren——'

'Nay, nay!' said the Abbot of Unreason, 'no speaking to the lay people until you have conferred with your brother of the cowl. I swear by bell, book, and candle that no one of my congregation shall listen to one word you have to say; so you had as well address yourself to me who will.'

To escape a conference so ludicrous, the abbot again attempted an appeal to what respectful feelings might yet remain amongst the inhabitants of the halidome, once so devoted to their spiritual superiors. Alas! the Abbot of Unreason had only to flourish his mock crosier, and the whooping, the hallooing, and the dancing were renewed with a vehemence which would have defied the lungs of an antor.

'And now, my mates,' said the Abbot of Unreason, 'once again dight your gabs and be hushed; let us see if the cock of Kennaquhair will fight or flee the pit.'

There was again a dead silence of expectation, of which Father Ambrose availed himself to address his antagonist, saying plainly that he could gain an audience on no other terms. 'Wretched man!' said he, 'hast thou no better employment for thy carnal wit than to employ it in leading these blind and helpless creatures into the pit of utter darkness?'

'Truly, my brother,' replied Howleglas, 'I can see little difference betwixt your employment and mine, save that you make a sermon of a jest and I make a jest of a sermon.'

'Unhappy being,' said the abbot, 'who hast no better subject of pleasantry than that which should make thee tremble, no sounder jest than thine own sins, and no better objects for laughter than those who can absolve thee from the guilt of them!'

'Verily, my reverend brother,' said the mock abbot, 'what you say might be true, if, in laughing at hypocrites, I meant to laugh at religion. Oh, it is a precious thing to wear a long dress, with a girdle and a cowl: we become a holy pillar of Mother Church, and a boy must not play at ball against the walls for fear of breaking a painted window!'

'And will you, my friends,' said the abbot, looking round and speaking with a vehemence which secured him a tranquil audience for some time — 'will you suffer a profane buffoon, within the very church of God, to insult His ministers? Many

of you — all of you, perhaps — have lived under my holy predecessors, who were called upon to rule in this church where I am called upon to suffer. If you have worldly goods, they are their gift; and, when you scorned not to accept better gifts — the mercy and forgiveness of the church — were they not ever at your command? — did we not pray while you were jovial, wake while you slept?

'Some of the good wives of the halidome were wont to say so,' said the Abbot of Unreason; but his jest met in this instance but slight applause, and Father Ambrose, having gained a moment's attention, hastened to improve it.

'What!' said he; 'and is this grateful — is it seemly — is it honest — to assail with scorn a few old men, from whose predecessors you hold all, and whose only wish is to die in peace among these fragments of what was once the light of the land, and whose daily prayer is, that they may be removed ere that hour comes when the last spark shall be extinguished, and the land left in the darkness which it has chosen rather than light? We have not turned against you the edge of the spiritual sword, to revenge our temporal persecution; the tempest of your wrath hath despoiled us of land, and deprived us almost of our daily food, but we have not repaid it with the thunders of excommunication; we only pray your leave to live and die within the church which is our own, invoking God, Our Lady, and the holy saints to pardon your sins, and our own, undisturbed by scurril buffoonery and blasphemy.'

This speech, so different in tone and termination from that which the crowd had expected, produced an effect upon their feelings unfavourable to the prosecution of their frolic. The morris-dancers stood still, the hobby-horse surceased his capering, pipe and tabor were mute, and 'silence, like a heavy cloud,' seemed to descend on the once noisy rabble. Several of the beasts were obviously moved to compunction: the bear could not restrain his sobs, and a huge fox was observed to wipe his eyes with his tail. But in especial the dragon, lately so formidably rampant, now relaxed the terror of his claws, uncoiled his tremendous rings, and grumbled out of his fiery throat in a repentant tone, 'By the mass, I thought no harm in exercising our old pastime, but an I had thought the good father would have taken it so to heart I would as soon have played your devil as your dragon.'

In this momentary pause, the abbot stood amongst the miscellaneous and grotesque forms by which he was surrounded,

triumphant as St. Anthony, in Callot's Temptations; but Howleglas would not so resign his purpose.

'And how now, my masters!' said he; 'is this fair play or no? Have you not chosen me Abbot of Unreason, and is it lawful for any of you to listen to common sense to-day? Was I not formally elected by you in solemn chapter, held in Luckie Martin's change-house, and will you now desert me, and give up your old pastime and privilege? Play out the play; and he that speaks the next word of sense or reason, or bids us think or consider, or the like of that, which befits not the day, I will have him solemnly ducked in the mill-dam!'

The rabble, mutable as usual, huzzaed, the pipe and tabor struck up, the hobby-horse pranced, the beasts roared, and even the repentant dragon began again to coil up his spires and prepare himself for fresh gambols. But the abbot might still have overcome, by his eloquence and his entreaties, the malicious designs of the revellers, had not Dame Magdalen Grime given loose to the indignation which she had long suppressed.

'Scoffers,' she said, 'and men of Belial — blasphemous heretics and truculent tyrants —'

'Your patience, my sister, I entreat and I command you!' said the abbot; 'let me do my duty: disturb me not in mine office.'

But Dame Magdalen continued to thunder forth her threats in the name of popes and councils, and in the name of every saint from St. Michael downward.

'My comrades!' said the Abbot of Unreason, 'this good dame hath not spoken a single word of reason, and therein may esteem herself free from the law. But what she spoke was meant for reason, and, therefore, unless she confesses and avouches all which she has said to be nonsense, it shall pass for such, so far as to incur our statutes. Wherefore, holy dame, pilgrim, or abbess, or whatever thou art, be mute with thy mummerly or beware the mill-dam. We will have neither spiritual nor temporal scolds in our diocese of Unreason!'

As he spoke thus, he extended his hand towards the old woman, while his followers shouted, 'A doom — a doom!' and prepared to second his purpose, when lo! it was suddenly frustrated. Roland Grime had witnessed with indignation the insults offered to his old spiritual preceptor, but yet had wit enough to reflect he could render him no assistance, but

might well, by ineffective interference, make matters worse. But when he saw his aged relative in danger of personal violence, he gave way to the natural impetuosity of his temper, and, stepping forward, struck his poniard into the body of the Abbot of Unreason, whom the blow instantly prostrated on the pavement.

CHAPTER XV

As when in tumults rise the ignoble crowd,
Mad are their motions, and their tongues are loud,
And stones and brands in rattling furies fly,
And all the rustic arms which fury can supply —
Then if some grave and pious man appear,
They hush their noise, and lend a listening ear.

DRYDEN'S *Virgil*.

A DREADFUL shout of vengeance was raised by the revellers, whose sport was thus so fearfully interrupted ; but, for an instant, the want of weapons amongst the multitude, as well as the inflamed features and brandished poniard of Roland Græme, kept them at bay, while the abbot, horror-struck at the violence, implored, with uplifted hands, pardon for bloodshed committed within the sanctuary. Magdalen Græme alone expressed triumph in the blow her descendant had dealt to the scoffer, mixed, however, with a wild and anxious expression of terror for her grandson's safety. 'Let him perish,' she said, 'in his blasphemy — let him die on the holy pavement which he has insulted !'

But the rage of the multitude, the grief of the abbot, the exultation of the enthusiastic Magdalen, were all mistimed and unnecessary. Howleglas, mortally wounded as he was supposed to be, sprung alertly up from the floor, calling aloud, 'A miracle — a miracle, my masters ! as brave a miracle as ever was wrought in the kirk of Kennaquhair. And I charge you, my masters, as your lawfully chosen abbot, that you touch no one without my command. You, wolf and bear, will guard this pragmatic youth, but without hurting him. And you, reverend brother, will, with your comrades, withdraw to your cells ; for our conference has ended like all conferences, leaving each of his own mind, as before ; and if we fight, both you, and your brethren, and the kirk, will have the worst on 't. Wherefore, pack up your pipes and begone.'

The hubbub was beginning again to awaken, but still Father Ambrose hesitated, as uncertain to what path his duty called him, whether to face out the present storm or to reserve himself for a better moment. His brother of Unreason observed his difficulty, and said, in a tone more natural and less affected than that with which he had hitherto sustained his character, 'We came hither, my good sir, more in mirth than in mischief: our bark is worse than our bite; and, especially, we mean you no personal harm; wherefore, draw off while the play is good; for it is ill whistling for a hawk when she is once on the sour, and worse to snatch the quarry from the han-dog. Let these fellows once begin their brawl, and it will be too much for madness itself, let alone the Abbot of Unreason, to bring them back to the lure.'

The brethren crowded around Father Ambrosius, and joined in urging him to give place to the torrent. The present revel was, they said, an ancient custom which his predecessors had permitted, and old Father Nicholas himself had played the dragon in the days of the Abbot Ingelram.

'And we now reap the fruit of the seed which they have so unadvisedly sown,' said Ambrosius: 'they taught men to make a mock of what is holy, what wonder that the descendants of scoffers become robbers and plunderers? But be it as you list, my brethren—move towards the dortour. And you, dame, I command you, by the authority which I have over you, and by your respect for that youth's safety, that you go with us without farther speech. Yet, stay—what are your intentions towards that youth whom you detain prisoner? Wot ye,' he continued, addressing Howleglas in a stern tone of voice, 'that he bears the livery of the house of Avenel? They who fear not the anger of Heaven may at least dread the wrath of man.'

'Cumber not yourself concerning him,' answered Howleglas, 'we know right well who and what he is.'

'Let me pray,' said the abbot, in a tone of entreaty, 'that you do him no wrong for the rash deed which he attempted in his imprudent zeal.'

'I say, cumber not yourself about it, father,' answered Howleglas; 'but move off with your train, male and female, or I will not undertake to save yonder she-saint from the ducking-stool. And as for bearing of malice, my stomach has no room for it; it is,' he added, clapping his hand on his portly belly, 'too well bumbasted out with straw and buckram; gramercy

to them both — they kept out that madcap's dagger as well as a Milan corslet could have done.'

In fact, the home-driven poniard of Roland Graine had lighted upon the stuffing of the fictitious paunch, which the Abbot of Unreason wore as a part of his characteristic dress, and it was only the force of the blow which had prostrated that reverend person on the ground for a moment.

Satisfied in some degree by this man's assurances, and compelled to give way to superior force, the Abbot Ambrosius retired from the church at the head of the monks, and left the court free for the revellers to work their will. But wild and wilful as these rioters were, they accompanied the retreat of the religionists with none of those shouts of contempt and derision with which they had at first hailed them. The abbot's discourse had affected some of them with remorse, others with shame, and all with a transient degree of respect. They remained silent until the last monk had disappeared through the side-door which communicated with their dwelling-place, and even then it cost some exhortations on the part of Howleglas, some caprioles of the hobby-horse, and some wallops of the dragon, to rouse once more the rebuked spirit of revelry.

'And how now, my masters?' said the Abbot of Unreason; 'and wherefore look on me with such blank Jack-a-Lent visages? Will you lose your old pastime for an old wife's tale of saints and purgatory? Why, I thought you would have made all split long since. Come, strike up, tabor and harp — strike up, fiddle and rebeck; dance and be merry to-day, and let care come to-morrow! Bear and wolf, look to your prisoner; prance, hobby; hiss, dragon, and halloo, boys! we grow older every moment we stand idle, and life is too short to be spent in playing munchance.'

This pithy exhortation was attended with the effect desired. They fumigated the church with burnt wool and feathers instead of incense, put foul water into the holy-water basins, and celebrated a parody on the church service, the mock abbot officiating at the altar; they sung ludicrous and indecent parodies to the tunes of church hymns; they violated whatever vestments or vessels belonging to the abbey they could lay their hands upon; and, playing every freak which the whim of the moment could suggest to their wild caprice, at length they fell to more lasting deeds of demolition, pulled down and destroyed some carved wood-work, dashed out the painted windows which had escaped former violence, and, in

their rigorous search after sculpture dedicated to idolatry, began to destroy what ornaments yet remained entire upon the tombs and around the cornices of the pillars.

The spirit of demolition, like other tastes, increases by indulgence: from these lighter attempts at mischief, the more tumultuous part of the meeting began to meditate destruction on a more extended scale. 'Let us heave it down altogether, the old crow's nest,' became a general cry among them; 'it has served the Pope and his rooks too long'; and up they struck a ballad which was then popular among the lower classes: ¹

'The Paip, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded us over lang,
For where the blind the blind doth lead,
No marvel baith gae wrang.
Like prince and king,
He led the ring
Of all iniquity.
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree.

The bishop rich, he could not preach
For sporting with the lasses;
The silly friar behoved to fleech
For awmons as he passes;
The curate his creed
He could not read, —
Shame fa' the company!
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree.'

Thundering out this chorus of a notable hunting-song, which had been pressed into the service of some polemical poet, the followers of the Abbot of Unreason were turning every moment more tumultuous, and getting beyond the management even of that reverend prelate himself, when a knight in full armour, followed by two or three men-at-arms, entered the church, and in a stern voice commanded them to forbear their riotous mummary.

His visor was up, but, if it had been lowered, the cognizance of the holly-branch sufficiently distinguished Sir Halbert Glendinning, who, on his homeward road, was passing through the village of Kennaquhair; and, moved perhaps by anxiety for his brother's safety, had come directly to the church on hearing of the uproar.

'What is the meaning of this,' he said, 'my masters? Are

¹ See 'The Paip, that Pagan.' Note 11.

ye Christian men, and the king's subjects, and yet waste and destroy church and chancel like so many heathens !'

All stood silent, though doubtless there were several disappointed and surprised at receiving chiding instead of thanks from so zealous a Protestant.

The dragon, indeed, did at length take upon him to be spokesman, and growled from the depth of his painted maw, that they did but sweep Popery out of the church with the besom of destruction.

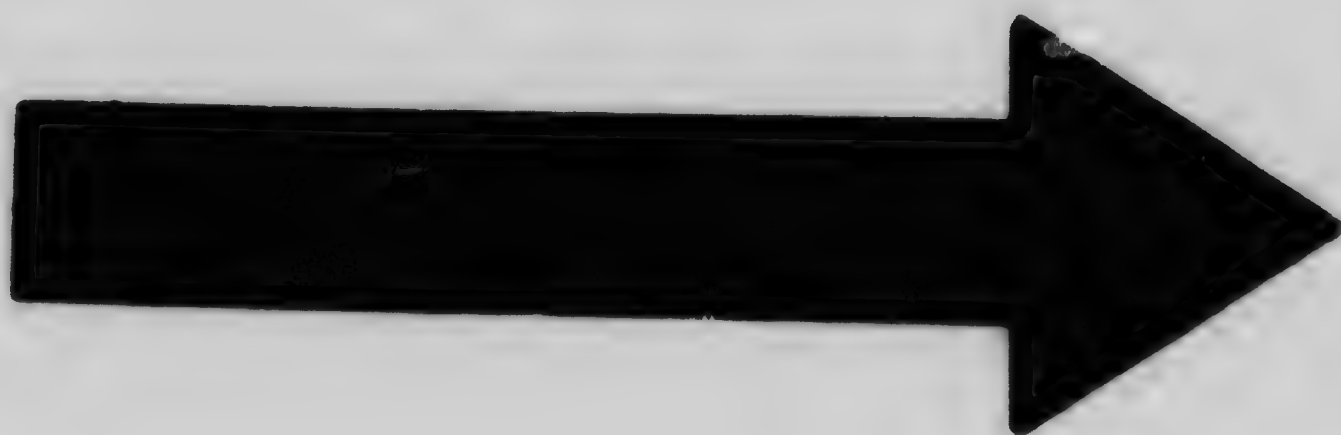
'What ! my friends,' replied Sir Halbert Glendinning, 'think you this mumming and masquing has not more of Popery in it than have these stone walls ! Take the leprosy out of your flesh before you speak of purifying stone walls : abate your insolent licence, which leads but to idle vanity and sinful excess ; and know, that what you now practise is one of the profane and unseemly sports introduced by the priests of Rome themselves, to mislead and to brutify the souls which fell into their net.'

'Marry come up — are you there with your bears !' muttered the dragon, with a draconic sullenness which was in good keeping with his character ; 'we had as good have been Romans still, if we are to have no freedom in our pastimes !'

'Durst thou reply to me so !' said Halbert Glendinning ; 'or is there any pastime in grovelling on the ground there like a gigantic kail-worm ! Get out of thy painted case, or, by my knighthood, I will treat you like the beast and reptile you have made yourself.'

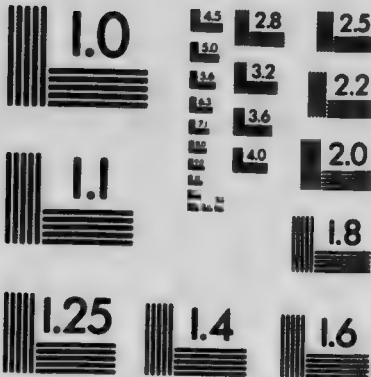
'Beast and reptile !' retorted the offended dragon ; 'setting aside your knighthood, I hold myself as well a born man as thyself.'

The knight made no answer in words, but bestowed two such blows with the butt of his lance on the petulant dragon, that, had not the hoops which constituted the ribs of the machine been pretty strong, they would hardly have saved those of the actor from being broken. In all haste the masquer crept out of his disguise, unwilling to abide a third buffet from the lance of the enraged knight. And when the ex-dragon stood on the floor of the church, he presented to Halbert Glendinning the well-known countenance of Dan of the Howlet-hirst, an ancient comrade of his own, ere fate had raised him so high above the rank to which he was born. The clown looked sulkily upon the knight, as if to upbraid him for his violence towards an old acquaintance, and Glendinning's own good-nature reproached him for the violence he had acted upon him.



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'I did wrong to strike thee,' he said, 'Dan; but in truth I knew thee not: thou wert ever a mad fellow. Come to Avenel Castle, and we shall see how my hawks fly.'

'And if we show him not falcons that will mount as merrily as rockets,' said the Abbot of Unreason, 'I would your honour laid as hard on my bones as you did on his even now.'

'How now, sir knave,' said the knight, 'and what has brought you hither?'

The abbot, hastily ridding himself of the false nose which mystified his physiognomy, and the supplementary belly which made up his disguise, stood before his master in his real character of Adam Woodcock, the falconer of Avenel.

'How, varlet!' said the knight; 'hast thou dared to come here, and disturb the very house my brother was dwelling in?'

'And it was even for that reason, craving your honour's pardon, that I came hither; for I heard the country was to be up to choose an Abbot of Unreason, and "Sure," thought I, "I that can sing, dance, leap backwards over a broadsword, and am as good a fool as ever sought promotion, have all chance of carrying the office; and if I gain my election, I may stand his honour's brother in some stead, supposing things fall roughly out at the kirk of St. Mary's."'

'Thou art but a cogging knave,' said Sir Halbert, 'and well I wot that love of ale and brandy, besides the humour of riot and frolic, would draw thee a mile, when love of my house would not bring thee a yard. But, go to — carry thy roisterers elsewhere — to the alehouse if they list, and there are crowns to pay your charges; make out the day's madness without doing more mischief, and be wise men to-morrow; and hereafter learn to serve a good cause better than by acting like buffoons or ruffians.'

Obedient to his master's mandate, the falconer was collecting his discouraged followers, and whispering into their ears — 'Away, away — *tace* is Latin for a candle. Never mind the good knight's Puritanism — we will play the frolic out over a stand of double ale in Dame Martin the brewster's barn-yard. Draw off, harp and tabor, bagpipe and drum, mum till you are out of the churchyard, then let the welkin ring again; move on, wolf and bear — keep the hind legs till you cross the kirk-stile, and then show yourselves beasts of mettle; what devil sent him here to spoil our holiday! But anger him not, my hearts; his lance is no goose-feather, as Dan's ribs can tell.'

'By my soul,' said Dan, 'had it been another than my

ancient comrade, I would have made my father's old fox¹ fly about his ears !'

'Hush ! — hush ! man,' replied Adam Woodcock, 'not a word that way, as you value the safety of your bones ; what, man ! we must take a clink as it passes, so it is not bestowed in downright ill-will.'

'But I will take no such thing,' said Dan of the Howlet-hirst, suddenly resisting the efforts of Woodcock, who was dragging him out of the church ; when, the quick military eye of Sir Halbert Glendinning detecting Roland Graeme betwixt his two guards, the knight exclaimed, 'So ho ! falconer — Woodcock — knave, hast thou brought my lady's page in mine own livery to assist at this hopeful revel of thine, with your wolves and bears ? Since you were at such mummings, you might, if you would, have at least saved the credit of my household by dressing him up as a jackanapes. Bring him hither, fellows !'

Adam Woodcock was too honest and downright to permit blame to light upon the youth when it was undeserved. 'I swear,' he said, 'by St. Martin of Bullions —'

'And what hast thou to do with St. Martin ?'

'Nay, little enough, sir, unless when he sends such rainy days that we cannot fly a hawk ; but I say to your worshipful knighthood that, as I am a true man —'

'As you are a false varlet, had been the better obtestation.'

'Nay, if your knighthood allows me not to speak,' said Adam, 'I can hold my tongue ; but the boy came not hither by my bidding, for all that.'

'But to gratify his own malapert pleasure, I warrant me,' said Sir Halbert Glendinning. 'Come hither, young springald, and tell me whether you have your mistress's license to be so far absent from the castle, or to dishonour my livery by mingling in such a May-game ?'

'Sir Halbert Glendinning,' answered Roland Graeme, with steadiness, 'I have obtained the permission, or rather the commands, of your lady to dispose of my time hereafter according to my own pleasure. I have been a most unwilling spectator of this May-game, since it is your pleasure so to call it ; and I only wear your livery until I can obtain clothes which bear no such badge of servitude.'

'How am I to understand this, young man ?' said Sir

¹ Fox — an old-fashioned broadsword was often so called.

² The Saint Swithin, or weeping Saint of Scotland. If his festival (4th July) prove wet, forty days of rain are expected.

Halbert Glendinning; 'speak plainly, for I am no reader of riddles. That my lady favoured thee, I know. What hast thou done to disoblige her, and occasion thy dismissal?'

'Nothing to speak of,' said Adam Woodcock, answering for the boy; 'a foolish quarrel with me, which was more foolishly told over again to my honoured lady, cost the poor boy his place. For my part, I will say freely that I was wrong from beginning to end, except about the washing of the eyas's meat. There I stand to it that I was right.'

With that, the good-natured falconer repeated to his master the whole history of the squabble which had brought Roland Græme into disgrace with his mistress, but in a manner so favourable for the page that Sir Halbert could not but suspect his generous motive.

'Thou art a good-natured fellow,' he said, 'Adam Woodcock.'

'As ever had falcon upon fist,' said Adam; 'and, for that matter, so is Master Roland; but, being half a gentleman by his office, his blood is soon up, and so is mine.'

'Well,' said Sir Halbert, 'be it as it will, my lady has acted hastily, for this was no great matter of offence to discard the lad whom she had trained up for years; but he, I doubt not, made it worse by his prating; it jumps well with a purpose, however, which I had in my mind. Draw off these people, Woodcock; and you, Roland Græme, attend me.'

The page followed him in silence into the abbot's house, where, stepping into the first apartment which he found open, he commanded one of his attendants to let his brother, Master Edward Glendinning, know that he desired to speak with him. The men-at-arms went gladly off to join their comrade, Adam Woodcock, and the jolly crew whom he had assembled at Dame Martin's, the hostler's wife; and the page and knight were left alone in the apartment. Sir Halbert Glendinning paced the floor for a moment in silence, and then thus addressed his attendant:

'Thou mayest have remarked, stripling, that I have but seldom distinguished thee by much notice—I see thy colour rises, but do not speak till thou hearest me out. I say, I have never much distinguished thee, not because I did not see that in thee which I might well have praised, but because I saw something blameable, which such praises might have made worse. Thy mistress, dealing according to her pleasure in her own household, as no one had better reason or title, had picked

thee from the rest, and treated thee more like a relation than a domestic ; and if thou hadst show some vanity and petulance under such distinction, it were injustice not to say that thou hast profited both in thy exercises and in thy breeding, and hast shown many sparkles of a gentle and manly spirit. Moreover, it were ungenerous, having bred thee up freakish and fiery, to dismiss thee to want or wandering for showing that very peevishness and impatience of discipline which arose from thy too delicate nurture. Therefore, and for the credit of my own household, I am determined to retain thee in my train, until I can honourably dispose of thee elsewhere, with a fair prospect of thy going through the world with credit to the house that brought thee up.

If there was something in Sir Halbert Glendinning's speech which flattered Roland's pride, there was also much that, according to his mode of thinking, was an alloy to the compliment. And yet his conscience instantly told him that he ought to accept, with grateful deference, the offer which was made him by the husband of his kind protectress ; and his prudence, however slender, could not but admit he should enter the world under very different auspices as a retainer of Sir Halbert Glendinning, so famed for wisdom, courage, and influence, from those under which he might partake the wanderings, and become an agent in the visionary schemes -- for such they appeared to him -- of Magdalen, his relative. Still, a strong reluctance to re-enter a service from which he had been dismissed with contempt almost counterbalanced these considerations.

Sir Halbert looked on the youth with surprise, and resumed : 'You seem to hesitate, young man. Are your own prospects so inviting that you should pause ere you accept those which I should offer to you ? or must I remind you that, although you have offended your benefactress, even to the point of her dismissing you, yet I am convinced, the knowledge that you have gone unguided on your own wild way, into a world so disturbed as ours of Scotland, cannot, in the upshot, but give her sorrow and pain ; from which it is, in gratitude, your duty to preserve her, no less than it is in common wisdom your duty to accept my offered protection, for your own sake, where body and soul are alike endangered should you refuse it.'

Roland Græme replied in a respectful tone, but at the same time with some spirit, 'I am not ungrateful for such countenance as has been afforded me by the Lord of Avenel, and

I am glad to learn, for the first time, that I have not had the misfortune to be utterly beneath his observation, as I had thought. And it is only needful to show me how I can testify my duty and my gratitude towards my early and constant benefactress with my life's hazard, and I will gladly peril it.' He stopped.

'These are but words, young man,' answered Glendinning; 'large protestations are often used to supply the place of effectual service. I know nothing in which the peril of your life can serve the Lady of Avenel; I can only say, she will be pleased to learn you have adopted some course which may ensure the safety of your person and the weal of your soul. What ails you, that you accept not that safety when it is offered you?'

'My only relative who is alive,' answered Roland — 'at least the only relative whom I have ever seen, has rejoined me since I was dismissed from the Castle of Avenel, and I must consult with her whether I can adopt the line to which you now call me, or whether her increasing infirmities, or the authority which she is entitled to exercise over me, may not require me to abide with her.'

'Where is this relation?' said Sir Halbert Glendinning.

'In this house,' answered the page.

'Go, then, and seek her out,' said the Knight of Avenel; 'more than meet it is that thou shouldst have her approbation, yet worse than foolish would she show herself in denying it.'

Roland left the apartment to seek for his grandmother, and as he retreated the abbot entered.

The two brothers met as brothers who loved each other fondly, yet meet rarely together. Such indeed was the case. Their mutual affection attached them to each other; but in every pursuit, habit, or sentiment connected with the discords of the times the friend and counsellor of Murray stood opposed to the Roman Catholic priest; nor, indeed, could they have held very much society together without giving cause of offence and suspicion to their confederates on each side. After a close embrace on the part of both, and a welcome on that of the abbot, Sir Halbert Glendinning expressed his satisfaction that he had come in time to appease the riot raised by Howleglas and his tumultuous followers.

'And yet,' he said, 'when I look on your garments, brother Edward, I cannot help thinking there still remains an Abbot of Unreason within the bounds of the monastery.'

'And wherefore carp at my garments, brother Halbert?' said the abbot; 'it is the spiritual armour of my calling, and, as such, beseems me as well as breastplate and baldric becomes your own bosom.'

'Ay, but there were small wisdom, methinks, in putting on armour where we have no power to fight: it is but a dangerous temerity to defy the foe whom we cannot resist.'

'For that, my brother, no one can answer,' said the abbot, 'until the battle be fought; and, were it even as you say, methinks a brave man, though desperate of victory, would rather desire to fight and fall than to resign sword and shield on some mean and dishonourable composition with his insulting antagonist. But let not you and me make discord of a theme on which we cannot agree, but rather stay and partake, though a heretic, of my admission feast. You need not fear, my brother, that your zeal for restoring the primitive discipline of the church will, on this occasion, be offended with the profusion of a conventual banquet. The days of our old Abbot Boniface are over; and the superior of St. Mary's has neither forests nor fishings, woods nor pastures, nor cornfields; neither flocks nor herds, bucks nor wild-fowl, granaries of wheat nor store-houses of oil and wine, of ale and of mead. The refectioner's office is ended; and such a meal as a hermit in romance can offer to a wandering knight is all we have to set before you. But, if you will share it with us, we shall eat it with a cheerful heart, and thank you, my brother, for your timely protection against these rude scoffers.'

'My dearest brother,' said the knight, 'it grieves me deeply I cannot abide with you; but it would sound ill for us both were one of the Reformed congregation to sit down at your admission feast; and, if I can ever have the satisfaction of affording you effectual protection, it will be much owing to my remaining unsuspected of countenancing or approving your religious rites and ceremonies. It will demand whatever consideration I can acquire among my own friends to shelter the bold man who, contrary to law and the edicts of parliament, has dared to take up the office of abbot of St. Mary's.'

'Trouble not yourself with the task, my brother,' replied Father Ambrosius. 'I would lay down my dearest blood to know that you defended the church for the church's sake; but, while you remain unhappily her enemy, I would not that you endangered your own safety, or diminished your own comforts, for the sake of my individual protection. But who comes

hither to disturb the few minutes of fraternal communication which our evil fate allows us !'

The door of the apartment opened as the abbot spoke, and Dame Magdalen entered.

'Who is this woman ?' said Sir Halbert Glendinning, somewhat sternly, 'and what does she want ?'

'That you know me not,' said the matron, 'signifies little ; I come by your own order, to give my free consent that the strippling, Roland Græme, return to your service ; and, having said so, I cumber you no longer with my presence. Peace be with you !' She turned to go away, but was stopped by the inquiries of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

'Who are you ? — what are you ? — and why do you not await to make me answer ?'

'I was,' she replied, 'while yet I belonged to the world, a matron of no vulgar name ; now I am Magdalen, a poor pilgrimer, for the sake of Holy Kirk.'

'Yea,' said Sir Halbert, 'art thou a Catholic ? I thought my dame said that Roland Græme came of Reformed kin.'

'His father,' said the matron, 'was a heretic, or rather one who regarded neither orthodoxy nor heresy — neither the temple of the church or of antichrist. I, too — for the sins of the times make sinners — have seemed to conform to your unhallowed rites ; but I had my dispensation and my absolution.'

'You see, brother,' said Sir Halbert, with a smile of meaning towards his brother, 'that we accuse you not altogether without grounds of mental equivocation.'

'My brother, you do us injustice,' replied the abbot ; 'this woman, as her bearing may of itself warrant you, is not in her perfect mind. Thanks, I must needs say, to the persecution of you: marauding barons and of your latitudinarian clergy.'

'I will not dispute the point,' said Sir Halbert ; 'the evils of the time are unhappily so numerous that both churches may be stricken and have enow to spare.' So saying, he leaned out of the window of the apartment and winded his bugle.

'Do you sound your horn, my brother ?' said the abbot ; 'I have spent but few minutes together.'

'Alas !' said the elder brother, 'and even these few have been sullied by disagreement. I sound to horse, my brother, the rather that, to avert the consequences of this day's rashness on your part requires hasty efforts on mine. Dame, you will oblige me by letting your young relative know that we mount instantly. I intend not that he shall return to Avenel with

me; it would lead to new quarrels betwixt him and my household: at least, to taunts which his proud heart could ill brook, and my wish is to do him kindness. He shall, therefore, go forward to Edinburgh with one of my retinue, whom I shall send back to say what has chanced here. You seem rejoiced at this?' he added, fixing his eyes keenly on Magdalen Græme, who returned his gaze with calm indifference.

'I would rather,' she said, 'that Roland, a poor and friendless orphan, were the jest of the world at large than of the menials at Avenel.'

'Fear not, dame, he shall be scorned by neither,' answered the knight.

'It may be,' she replied — 'it may well be; but I will trust more to his own bearing than to your countenance.' She left the room as she spoke.

The knight looked after her as she departed, but turned instantly to his brother, and expressing, in the most affectionate terms, his wishes for his welfare and happiness, craved his leave to depart. 'My knaves,' he said, 'are too busy at the ale-stand to leave their revelry for the empty breath of a bugle-horn.'

'You have freed them from higher restraint, Halbert,' answered the abbot, 'and therein taught them to rebel against your own.'

'Fear not that, Edward,' exclaimed Halbert, who never gave his brother his monastic name of Ambrosius; 'none obey the command of real duty so well as those who are free from the obscurity of slavish bondage.'

He was turning to depart, when the abbot said, 'Let us not yet part, my brother; here comes some light refreshment. Leave not the house which I must now call mine, till force expel me from it, until you have at least broken bread with me.'

The poor lay brother, the same who acted as porter, now entered the apartment, bearing some simple refreshment and a flask of wine. 'He had found it,' he said with officious humility, 'by rummaging through every nook of the cellar.'

The knight filled a small silver cup, and, quaffing it off, asked his brother to pledge him, observing, the wine was Bacharac, of the first vintage, and great age.

'Ay,' said the poor lay brother, 'it came out of the nook which old Brother Nicholas — may his soul be happy! — was wont to call Abbot Ingelram's corner; and Abbot Ingelram was bred at the convent of Würzburg, which I understand to be near where that choice wine grows.'

'True, my reverend sir,' said Sir Halbert; 'and therefore I entreat my brother and you to pledge me in a cup of this orthodox vintage.'

The thin old porter looked with a wishful glance towards the abbot. '*Do veniam*,' said his superior; and the old man seized, with a trembling hand, a beverage to which he had been long unaccustomed, drained the cup with protracted delight, as if dwelling on the flavour and perfume, and set it down with a melancholy smile and shake of the head, as if bidding adieu in future to such delicious potations. The brothers smiled. But when Sir Halbert motioned to the abbot to take up his cup and do him reason, the abbot, in turn, shook his head, and replied, 'This is no day for the abbot of St. Mary's to eat the fat and drink the sweet. In water from Our Lady's well,' he added, filling a cup with the limpid element, 'I wish you, my brother, all happiness, and, above all, a true sight of your spiritual errors.'

'And to you, my beloved Edward,' replied Glendinning, 'I wish the free exercise of your own free reason, and the discharge of more important duties than are connected with the idle name which you have so rashly assumed.'

The brothers parted with deep regret; and yet each, confident in his opinion, felt somewhat relieved by the absence of one whom he respected so much, and with whom he could agree so little.

Soon afterwards the sound of the Knight of Avenel's trumpets was heard, and the abbot went to the top of the tower, from whose dismantled battlements he could soon see the horsemen ascending the rising ground in the direction of the drawbridge. As he gazed, Magdalen Græme came to his side.

'Thou art come,' he said, 'to catch the last glimpse of thy grandson, my sister. Yonder he wends, under the charge of the best knight in Scotland, his faith ever excepted.'

'Thou canst not witness, my father, that it was no wish either of mine or of Roland's,' replied the matron, 'which induced the Knight of Avenel, as he is called, again to entertain my grandson in his household. Heaven, which confounds the wise with their own wisdom, and the wicked with their own policy, hath placed him where, for the services of the church, I would most wish him to be.'

'I know not what you mean, my sister,' said the abbot.

'Reverend father,' replied Magdalen, 'hast thou never heard that there are spirits powerful to rend the walls of a castle

asunder when once admitted, which yet cannot enter the house unless they are invited, nay, dragged over the threshold? 'Twice hath Roland Greeme been thus drawn into the household of Avenel by those who now hold the title. Let them look to the issue.'

So saying, she left the turret; and the abbot, after pausing a moment on her words, which he imputed to the unsettled state of her mind, followed down the winding stair to celebrate his admission to his high office by fast and prayer, instead of revelling and thanksgiving.

¹ See Inability of Evil Spirits to enter a House uninvited. Note 12.

CHAPTER XVI

Youth ! thou wear'st to manhood now.
Darker lip and darker brow,
Statelier step, more pensive mien,
In thy face and gait are seen :
Thou must now brook midnight watches,
Take thy food and sport by snatches !
For the gambol and the jest,
Thou wert wont to love the best,
Graver follies must thou follow,
But as senseless, false, and hollow.

Life, a Poem.

YOUNG Roland Græme now trotted gaily forward in the train of Sir Halbert Glendinning. He was relieved from his most galling apprehension -- the encounter of the scorn and taunt which might possibly hail his immediate return to the Castle of Avenel. 'There will be a change ere they see me again,' he thought to himself ; 'I shall wear the coat of plate, instead of the green jerkin, and the steel morion for the bonnet and feather. They will be bold that may venture to break a gibe on the man-at-arms for the follies of the page ; and I trust that, ere we return, I shall have done something more worthy of note than hallooing a hound after a deer, or scrambling a cat for a kite's nest.' He could not, indeed, help marvel that his grandmother, with all her religious prejudices lean- ing it would seem, to the other side, had consented so readily to his re-entering the service of the house of Avenel ; and yet more at the mysterious joy with which she took leave of him at the abbey.

'Heaven,' said the dame, as she kissed her young relation, and bade him farewell, 'works its own work, even by the hands of those of our enemies who think themselves the strongest and the wisest. Thou, my child, be ready to act upon the call of thy religion and country ; and remember, each earthly bond which thou canst form is, compared to the ties which bind thee

to them, like the loose flax to the twisted cable. Thou hast not forgot the face or form of the damsel Catherine Seyton ?'

Roland would have replied in the negative, but the word seemed to stick in his throat, and Magdalen continued her exhortations.

'Thou must not forget her, my son ; and here I entrust thee with a token, which I trust thou wilt speedily find an opportunity of delivering with care and secrecy into her own hand.'

She put here into Roland's hand a very small packet, of which she again enjoined him to take the strictest care, and to suffer it to be seen by no one save Catherine Seyton, who, she again (very unnecessarily) reminded him, was the young maiden he had met on the preceding day. She then bestowed on him her solemn benediction, and bade God speed him.

There was something in her manner and her conduct which implied mystery ; but Roland Grime was not of an age or temper to waste much time in endeavouring to decipher her meaning. All that was obvious to his perception in the present journey promised pleasure and novelty. He rejoiced that he was travelling towards Edinburgh, in order to assume the character of a man, and lay aside that of a boy. He was delighted to think that he would have an opportunity of rejoining Catherine Seyton, whose bright eyes and lively manners had made so favourable an impression on his imagination ; and, as an inexperienced yet high-spirited youth, entering for the first time upon active life, his heart bounded at the thought that he was about to see all those scenes of courtly splendour and warlike adventures of which the followers of Sir Halbert used to boast on their occasional visits to Avenel, to the wonderment and envy of those who, like Roland, knew courts and camps only by hearsay ; and were condemned to the solitary sports and almost monastic seclusion of Avenel, surrounded by its lonely lake, and embosomed among its pathless mountains. 'They shall mention my name,' he said to himself, 'if the risk of my life can purchase me opportunities of distinction, and Catherine Seyton's saucy eye shall rest with more respect on the distinguished soldier than that with which she laughed to scorn the raw and inexperienced page.' There was wanting but one accessory to complete the sense of rapturous excitement, and he possessed it by being once more mounted on the back of a fiery and active horse, instead of plodding along on foot, as had been the case during the preceding days.

Impelled by the liveliness of his own spirits, which so many circumstances tended naturally to exalt, Roland Græme's voice and his laughter were soon distinguished amid the trampling of the horses of the retinue, and more than once attracted the attention of their leader, who remarked with satisfaction that the youth replied with good-humoured raillery to such of the train as jested with him on his dismissal and return to the service of the house of Avenel.

'I thought the holly-branch in your bonnet had been blighted, Master Roland?' said one of the men-at-arms.

'Only pinched with half an hour's frost; you see it flourishes as green as ever.'

'It is too grave a plant to flourish on so hot a soil as that head-piece of thine, Master Roland Græme,' retorted the other, who was an old equerry of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

'If it will not flourish alone,' said Roland, 'I will mix it with the laurel and the myrtle; and I will carry them so near the sky that it shall make amends for their stunted growth.'

Thus speaking, he dashed his spurs into his horse's sides, and, checking him at the same time, compelled him to execute a lofty caracole. Sir Halbert Glendinning looked at the demeanour of his new attendant with that sort of melancholy pleasure with which those who have long followed the pursuits of life, and are sensible of their vanity, regard the gay, young, and buoyant spirits to whom existence as yet is only hope and promise.

In the meanwhile, Adam Woodcock, the falconer, stripped of his masquing habit, and attired, according to his rank and calling, in a green jerkin, with a hawking-bag on the one side and a short hanger on the other, a glove on his left hand which reached half-way up his arm, and a bonnet and feather upon his head, came after the party as fast as his active little Galloway nag could trot, and immediately entered into parley with Roland Græme.

'So, my youngster, you are once more under shadow of the holly-branch?'

'And in case to repay you, my good friend,' answered Roland, 'your ten groats of silver.'

'Which, but an hour since,' said the falconer, 'you had nearly paid me with ten inches of steel. On my faith, it is written in the book of our destiny that I must brook your dagger, after all.'

'Nay, speak not of that, my good friend,' said the youth, 'I

would rather have broached my own bosom than yours ; but who could have known you in the mumming dress you wore ?'

'Yes,' the falconer resumed, for both as a poet and actor he had his own professional share of self-conceit, 'I think I was as good a Howleglas as ever played part at a Shrovetide revelry, and not a much worse Abbot of Unreason. I defy the Old Enemy to unmasque me when I choose to keep my vizard on. What the devil brought the knight on us before we had the game out ? You would have heard me halloo my own new ballad with a voice should have reached to Berwick. But I pray you, Master Roland, be less free of cold steel on slight occasions ; since, but for the stuffing of my reverend doublet, I had only left the kirk to take my place in the kirkyard.'

'Nay, spare me that feud,' said Roland Græme, 'we shall have no time to fight it out ; for, by our lord's command, I am bound for Edinburgh.'

'I know it,' said Adam Woodcock, 'and even therefore we shall have time to soldier up this rent by the way, for Sir Halbert has appointed me your companion and guide.'

'Ay ? and with what purpose ?' said the page.

'That,' said the falconer, 'is a question I cannot answer ; but I know that, be the fool of the eyases washed or unwashed, and, indeed, whatever becomes of perch and mew, I am to go with you to Edinburgh, and see you safely delivered to the Regent at Holyrood.'

'How, to the Regent ?' said Roland, in surprise.

'Ay, by my faith, to the Regent,' replied Woodcock ; 'I promise you that, if you are not to enter his service, at least you are to wait upon him in the character of a retainer of our Knight of Avenel.'

'I know no right,' said the youth, 'which the Knight of Avenel hath to transfer my service, supposing that I owe it to himself.'

'Hush — hush !' said the falconer ; 'that is a question I advise no one to stir in until he has the mountain or the lake, or the march of another kingdom, which is better than either, betwixt him and his feudal superior.'

'But Sir Halbert Glendinning,' said the youth, 'is not my feudal superior ; nor has he aught of authority —'

'I pray you, my son, to rein your tongue,' answered Adam Woodcock ; 'my lord's displeasure, if you provoke it, will be worse to appease than my lady's. The touch of his least finger were heavier than her hardest blow. And, by my faith, he is

a man of steel, as true and as pure, but as hard and as pitiless. You remember the Cock of Capperlaw, whom he hanged over his gate for a mere mistake—a poor yoke of oxen taken in Scotland, when he thought he was taking them in English land? I loved the Cock of Capperlaw; the Kerrs had not an honester man in their clan, and they have had men that might have been a pattern to the Border—men that would not have lifted under twenty cows at once, and would have held themselves dishonoured if they had taken a drift of sheep or the like, but always managed their raids in full credit and honour. But see, his worship halts, and we are close by the bridge. Ride up—ride up; we must have his last instructions.'

It was as Adam Woodcock said. In the hollow way descending towards the bridge, which was still in the guardianship of Peter Bridge-Ward, as he was called, though he was now very old, Sir Halbert Glendinning halted his retinue, and beckoned to Woodcock and Græme to advance to the head of the train.

'Woodcock,' said he, 'thou knowest to whom thou art to conduct this youth. And thou, young man, obey discreetly and with diligence the orders that shall be given thee. Curb thy vain and peevish temper. Be just, true, and faithful; and there is in thee that which may raise thee many a degree above thy present station. Neither shalt thou—always supposing thine efforts to be fair and honest—want the protection and countenance of Avenel.'

Leaving them in front of the bridge, the centre tower of which now began to cast a prolonged shade upon the river, the Knight of Avenel turned to the left, without crossing the river, and pursued his way towards the chain of hills within whose recesses are situated the Lake and Castle of Avenel. There remained behind, the falconer, Roland Græme, and a domestic of the knight, of inferior rank, who was left with them to look after their horses while on the road, to carry their baggage, and to attend to their convenience.

So soon as the more numerous body of riders had turned off to pursue their journey westward, those whose route lay across the river, and was directed towards the north, summoned the bridge-ward, and demanded a free passage.

'I will not lower the bridge,' answered Peter, in a voice querulous with age and ill-humour. 'Come Papist, come Protestant, ye are all the same. The Papists threatened us with purgatory, and fleeced us with pardons; the Protestant mints at us with his sword, and cuittles us with the liberty of

conscience ; but never a one of either says, "Peter, there is your penny." I am well tired of all this, and for no man shall the bridge fall that pays me not ready money ; and I would have you know I care as little for Geneva as for Rome, as little for homilies as for pardons : and the silver pennies are the only passports I will hear of

'Here is a proper old chuff!' said Woodcock to his companion ; then raising his voice, he exclaimed, 'Hark thee, dog, — bridge-ward — villain, dost thou think we have refused thy namesake Peter's pence to Rome, to pay thine at the bridge of Kennaquhair? Let thy bridge down instantly to the followers of the house of Avenel, or by the hand of my father, and that handled many a bridle rein, for he was a bluff Yorkshireman — I say, by my father's hand, our knight will blow thee out of thy solan-goose's nest there in the middle of the water, with the light falconet which we are bringing southward from Edinburgh to-morrow.'

The bridge-ward heard, and muttered, 'A plague on falcon and falconet, on cannon and demi-cannon, and all the barking bull-dogs whom they halloo against stone and lime in these our days! It was a merry time when there was little besides handy blows, and it may be a flight of arrows that harmed an ashler wall as little as so many hailstones. But we must jouk and let the jaw gang by.' Comforting himself in his state of diminished consequence with this pithy old proverb, Peter Bridge-Ward lowered the drawbridge, and permitted them to pass over. At the sight of his white hair, albeit it discovered a visage equally peevish through age and misfortune, Roland was inclined to give him an alms, but Adam Woodcock prevented him. 'E'en let him pay the penalty of his former churlishness and greed,' he said ; 'the wolf, when he has lost his teeth, should be treated no better than a cur.'

Leaving the bridge-ward to lament the alteration of times, which sent domineering soldiers and feudal retainers to his place of passage, instead of peaceful pilgrims, and reduced him to become the oppressed, instead of playing the extortioner, the travellers turned them northward ; and Adam Woodcock, well acquainted with that part of the country, proposed to cut short a considerable portion of the road by traversing the little vale of Glendearg, so famous for the adventures which befell therein during the earlier part of the Benedictine's Manuscript. With these, and with the thousand commentaries, representations and misrepresentations to which they had given rise, Roland

Græme was, of course, well acquainted; for in the Castle of Avenel, as well as in other great establishments, the inmates talked of nothing so often, or with such pleasure, as of the private affairs of their lord and lady. But while Roland was viewing with interest these haunted scenes, in which things were said to have passed beyond the ordinary laws of nature, Adam Woodcock was still regretting in his secret soul the unfinished revel and the unsung ballad, and kept every now and then breaking out with some such verses as these :

'The friars of Fail drank berry-brown ale,
The best that e'er was tasted ;
The monks of Melrose made gude kale
On Fridays, when they fasted.
St. Monance' sister,
The grey priest kist her —
Fiend save the company !
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree !'

'By my hand, friend Woodcock,' said the page, 'though I know you for a hardy Gospeller, that fear neither saint nor devil, yet, if I were you, I would not sing your profane songs in this valley of Glendearg, considering what has happened here before our time.'

'A straw for your wandering spirits !' said Adam Woodcock ; 'I mind them no more than an earn cares for a string of wild geese ; they have all fled since the pulpits were filled with honest men, and the people's ears with sound doctrine. Nay, I have a touch at them in my ballad, an I had but had the good luck to have it sung to end' ; and again he set off in the same key :

'From haunted spring and grassy ring
Troop goblin, elf, and fairy ;
And the kelpie must flit from the black bog-pit,
And the brownie must not tarry ;
To limbo lake
Their way they take,
With scarce the pith to flee.
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree !

I think,' he added, 'that, could Sir Halbert's patience have stretched till we came that length, he would have had a hearty laugh, and that is what he seldom enjoys.'

'If it be all true that men tell of his early life,' said Roland, 'he has less right to laugh at goblins than most men.'

'Ay, if it be all true,' answered Adam Woodcock; 'but who can ensure us of that? Moreover, these were but tales the monks used to gull us simple laymen withal; they knew that fairies and hobgoblins brought aves and paternosters into repute; but now we have given up worship of images in wood and stone, methinks it were no time to be afraid of bubbles in the water or shadows in the air.'

'However,' said Roland Græme, 'as the Catholics say they do not worship wood or stone, but only as emblems of the holy saints, and not as things holy in themselves——'

'Pshaw! pshaw!' answered the falconer; 'a rush for their prating. They told us another story when these baptised idols of theirs brought pike-staves and sandalled shoon from all the four winds, and whillied the old women out of their corn and their candle-ends, and their butter, bacon, wool, and cheese, and when not so much as a grey groat escaped tithing.'

Roland Græme had been long taught, by necessity, to consider his form of religion as a profound secret, and to say nothing whatever in its defence when assailed, lest he should draw on himself the suspicion of belonging to the unpopular and exploded church. He therefore suffered Adam Woodcock to triumph without farther opposition, marvelling in his own mind whether any of the goblins, formerly such active agents, would avenge his rude raillery before they left the valley of Glendearg. But no such consequences followed. They passed the night quietly in a cottage in the glen, and the next day resumed their route to Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XVII

Edina! Scotia's darling seat,
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once, beneath a monarch's feet,
Sate legislation's sovereign powers!

BURNA.

'THIS, then, is Edinburgh?' said the youth, as the fellow-travellers arrived at one of the heights to the southward, which commanded a view of the great northern capital — 'this is that Edinburgh of which we have heard so much?'

'Even so,' said the falconer; 'yonder stands Auld Reekie; you may see the smoke hover over her at twenty miles' distance, as the goss-hawk hangs over a plump of young wild ducks; ay, yonder is the heart of Scotland, and each throb that she gives is felt from the edge of Solway to Duncansbay Head. See, yonder is the old Castle; and see to the right, on yon rising ground, that is the Castle of Craigmillar, which I have known a merry place in my time.'

'Was it not there,' said the page in a low voice, 'that the Queen held her court?'

'Ay, ay,' replied the falconer — 'Queen she was then, though you must not call her so now. Well, they may say what they will — many a true heart will be sad for Mary Stewart, e'en if all be true men say of her; for look you, Master Roland, she was the loveliest creature to look upon that I ever saw with eye, and no lady in the land liked better the fair flight of a falcon. I was at the great match on Roslin Moor betwixt Bothwell he was a black sight to her that Bothwell — and the Baron of Roslin, who could judge a hawk's flight as well as any man in Scotland: a butt of Rhenish and a ring of gold was the wager, and it was flown as fairly for as ever was red gold and bright wine. And to see her there on her white palfrey, that flew as if it scorned to touch more than the heather blossom; and to hear her voice, as clear and sweet as the mavis's whistle, mix

amo: ... jolly whooping and whistling; and to mark all the nobles ... ing round her — happiest he who got a word or a look — tearing through moss and hagg, and venturing neck and limb to gain the praise of a bold rider, and the blink of a bonny queen's bright eye! She will see little hawking where she lies now; ay, ay, pomp and pleasure pass away as speedily as the wap of a falcon's wing.'

'And where is this poor queen now confined?' said Roland Graeme, interested in the fate of a woman whose beauty and grace had made so strong an impression even on the blunt and careless character of Adam Woodcock.

'Where is she now imprisoned?' said honest Adam; 'why, in some castle in the north, they say. I know not where, for my part, nor is it worth while to vex one's self anent what cannot be mended. An she had guided her power well whilst she had it she had not come to so evil a pass. Men say she must resign her crown to this little baby of a prince, for that they will trust her with it no longer. Our master has been as busy as his neighbours in all this work. If the Queen should come to her own again, Avenel Castle is like to smoke for it, unless he makes his bargain all the better.'

'In a castle in the north Queen Mary is confined?' said the page.

'Why, ay — they say so, at least. In a castle beyond that great river which comes down yonder, and looks like a river; but it is a branch of the sea, and as bitter as brine.'

'And amongst all her subjects,' said the page, with some emotion, 'is there one at all adventure anything for her relief?'

'That is a kindly question,' said the falconer; 'and if you ask it often, Master Roland, I am fain to tell you that you will be mewed up yourself in some of those castles, if they do not prefer twisting your head off, to save farther trouble with you. Adventure anything! Lord, why, Murray has the wind in his poop now, man, and flies so high and strong that the devil a wing of them can match him. No, no; there she is, and there she must lie, till Heaven send her deliverance, or till her son has the management of all. But Murray will never let her loose again, he knows her too well. And hark thee, we are now bound for Holyrood, where thou wilt find plenty of news and of courtiers to tell it. But, take my counsel, and keep a calm sough, as the Scots say: hear every man's counsel, and keep your own. And if you hap to learn any news you like,

leap not up as if you were to put on armour direct in the cause. Our old Mr. Wingate says — and he knows court cattle well — that if you are told old King Coul is come alive again, you should turn it off with, "And is he, in truth? I heard not of it," and should seem no more moved than if one told you, by way of novelty, that old King Coul was dead and buried. Wherefore, look well to your bearing, Mr. Roland, for I promise you, you come among a generation that are keen as a hungry hawk. And never be dagger out of sheath at every wry word you hear spoken; for you will find as hot blades as yourself, and then will be letting of blood witho. . advice either of leech or almanack.'

'You shall see how staid I will be, and how cautious, my good friend,' said Grème; 'but, blessed Lady, what goodly house is that which is lying all in ruins so close to the city? Have they been playing at the Abbot of Unreason here, and ended the gambol by burning the church?'

'There again now,' replied his companion, 'you go down the wind like a wild haggard, that minds neither lure nor beck; that is a question you should have asked in as low a tone as I shall answer it.'

'If I stay here long,' said Roland Grème, 'it is like I shall lose the natural use of my voice; but what are the ruins then?'

'The Kirk of Field,' said the falconer, in a low and impressive whisper, laying at the same time his finger on his lip; 'ask no more about it; somebody got foul play, and somebody got the blame of it; and the game began there which perhaps may not be played out in our time. Poor Henry Darnley! to be an ass, he understood somewhat of a hawk! but they sent him on the wing through the air himself one bright moonlight night.'

The memory of this catastrophe was so recent that the page averted his eyes with horror from the scathed ruins in which it had taken place; and the accusations against the Queen, to which it had given rise, came over his mind with such strength as to balance the compassion he had begun to entertain for her present forlorn situation.

It was, indeed, with that agitating state of mind which arises partly from horror, but more from anxious interest and curiosity, that young Grème found himself actually traversing the scene of those tremendous events the report of which had disturbed the most distant solitudes in Scotland, like the echoes of distant thunder rolling among the mountains.

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OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH.
From a recent photograph.

'Now,' he thought — 'now or never shall I become a man, and bear my part in those deeds which the simple inhabitants of our hamlets repeat to each other as if they were wrought by beings of a superior order to their own! I will know now wherefore the Knight of Avenel carries his crest so much above those of the neighbouring baronage, and how it is that men, by valour and wisdom, work their way from the hoddie-grey coat to the cloak of scarlet and gold. Men say I have not much wisdom to recommend me; and if that be true, courage must do it; for I will be a man amongst living men, or a dead corpse amongst the dead.'

From these dreams of ambition he turned his thoughts to those of pleasure, and began to form many conjectures when and where he should see Catherine Seyton, and in what manner their acquaintance was to be renewed. With such conjectures he was amusing himself, when he found that they had entered the city, and all other feelings were suspended in the sense of giddy astonishment with which an inhabitant of the country is affected when, for the first time, he finds himself in the streets of a large and populous city, a unit in the mid-thousands.

The principal street of Edinburgh was then, as now, one of the most spacious in Europe. The extreme height of the houses, and the variety of Gothic gables, and battlements, and balconies, by which the sky-line on each side was crowned and terminated, together with the width of the street itself, might have struck with surprise a more practised eye than that of young Græme. The population, close packed within the walls of the city, and at this time increased by the number of the lords of the King's party who had thronged to Edinburgh to wait upon the Regent Murray, absolutely swarmed like bees on the wide and stately street. Instead of the shop-windows, which are now calculated for the display of goods, the traders had their open booths projecting on the street, in which, as in the fashion of the modern bazars, all was exposed which they had upon sale. And though the commodities were not of the richest kinds, yet Græme thought he beheld the wealth of the whole world in the various bales of Flanders cloths and the specimens of tapestry; and at other places the display of domestic utensils and pieces of plate struck him with wonder. The sight of cutlers' booths, furnished with swords and poniards, which were manufactured in Scotland, and with pieces of defensive armour, imported from Flanders, added to his sur-

prise; and at every step he found so much to admire and to gaze upon that Adam Woodcock had no little difficulty in prevailing on him to advance through such a scene of enchantment.

The sight of the crowds which filled the streets was equally a subject of wonder. Here a gay lady, in her muffler, or silken veil, traced her way delicately, a gentleman-usher making way for her, a page bearing up her train, and a waiting gentlewoman carrying her Bible, thus intimating that her purpose was towards the church. There he might see a group of citizens bending the same way, with their short Flemish cloaks, wide trousers, and high-caped doublets — a fashion to which, as well as to their bonnet and feather, the Scots were long faithful. Then, again, came the clergyman himself, in his black Geneva cloak and band, lending a grave and attentive ear to the discourse of several persons who accompanied him, and who were doubtless holding serious converse on the religious subject he was about to treat of. Nor did there lack passengers of a different class and appearance.

At every turn, Roland Greeme might see a gallant ruffe along in the newer or French mode, his doublet slashed, and his points of the same colours with the lining, his long sword on one side, and his poniard on the other, behind him a body of stout serving-men, proportioned to his estate and quality, all of whom walked with the air of military retainers, and were armed with sword and buckler, the latter being a small round shield, not unlike the Highland target, having a steel spike in the centre. Two of these parties, each headed by a person of importance, chanced to meet in the very centre of the street, or, as it was called, 'the crown of the causeway' — a post of honour as tenaciously asserted in Scotland as that of giving or taking the wall used to be in the more southern part of the island. The two leaders being of equal rank, and, most probably, either animated by political dislike, or by recollection of some feudal enmity, marched close up to each other, without yielding an inch to the right or the left: and neither showing the least purpose of giving way, they stopped for an instant, and then drew their swords. Their followers imitated their example: about a score of weapons at once flashed in the sun, and there was an immediate clatter of swords and bucklers, while the followers on either side cried their master's name: the one shouting, 'Help, a Leslie! — a Leslie!' while the others answered with shouts of 'Seyton! —

Seyton!' with the additional punning shout, 'Set on — set on; bear the knaves to the ground!'

If the falconer found difficulty in getting the page to go forward before, it was now perfectly impossible. He reined up his horse, clapped his hands, and, delighted with the fray, cried and shouted as fast as any of those who were actually engaged in it.

The noise and cries thus arising on the Highgate, as it was called, drew into the quarrel two or three other parties of gentlemen and their servants, besides some single passengers, who, hearing a fray betwixt these two distinguished names, took part in it, either for love or hatred.

The combat became now very sharp, and although the sword-and-buckler men made more-clatter and noise than they did real damage, yet several good cuts were dealt among them; and those who wore rapiers — a more formidable weapon than the ordinary Scottish swords — gave and received dangerous wounds. Two men were already stretched on the causeway, and the party of Seyton began to give ground, being much inferior in number to the other, with which several of the citizens had united themselves, when young Roland Grime, beholding their leader, a noble gentleman, fighting bravely, and hard pressed with numbers, could withhold no longer. 'Adam Woodcock,' he said, 'an you be a man, draw, and let us take part with the Seyton.' And, without waiting a reply, or listening to the falconer's earnest entreaty that he would leave alone a strife in which he had no concern, the fiery youth sprung from his horse, drew his short sword, and shouting like the rest, 'A Seyton! — a Seyton! Set on! — set on!' thrust forward into the throng, and struck down one of those who was pressing hardest upon the gentleman whose cause he espoused. This sudden reinforcement gave spirit to the weaker party, who began to renew the combat with much alacrity, when four of the magistrates of the city, distinguished by their velvet cloaks and gold chains, came up with a guard of halberdiers and citizens, armed with long weapons, and well accustomed to such service, thrust boldly forward, and compelled the swordsmen to separate, who immediately retreated in different directions, leaving such of the wounded on both sides as had been disabled in the fray lying on the street.

The falconer, who had been tearing his beard for anger at his comrade's rashness, now rode up to him with the horse, which he had caught by the bridle, and accosted him with

'Master Roland — master goose — master madcap — will it please you to get on horse, and budge? or will you remain here to be carried to prison, and made to answer for this pretty day's work?'

The page, who had begun his retreat along with the Seytons, just as if he had been one of their natural allies, was by this unceremonious application made sensible that he was acting a foolish part; and, obeying Adam Woodcock, with some sense of shame, he sprung actively on horseback, and upsetting with the shoulder of the animal a city-officer who was making towards him, he began to ride smartly down the street, along with his companion, and was quickly out of the reach of the hue and cry. In fact, rencounters of the kind were so common in Edinburgh at that period that the disturbance seldom excited much attention after the affray was over, unless some person of consequence chanced to have fallen, an incident which imposed on his friends the duty of avenging his death on the first convenient opportunity. So feeble, indeed, was the arm of the police, that it was not unusual for such skirmishes to last for hours, where the parties were numerous and well matched. But at this time the Regent, a man of great strength of character, aware of the mischief which usually arose from such acts of violence, had prevailed with the magistrates to keep a constant guard on foot, for preventing or separating such affrays as had happened in the present case.

The falconer and his young companion were now riding down the Canongate, and had slackened their pace to avoid attracting attention, the rather that there seemed to be no appearance of pursuit. Roland hung his head as one who was conscious his conduct had been none of the wisest, whilst his companion thus addressed him:

'Will you be pleased to tell me one thing, Master Roland Græme, and that is, whether there be a devil incarnate in you or no?'

'Truly, Master Adam Woodcock,' answered the page, 'I would fain hope there is not.'

'Then,' said Adam, 'I would fain know by what other influence or instigation you are perpetually at one end or the other of some bloody brawl? What, I pray, haue you to do with these Seytons and Leslies, that you never heard the names of in your life before?'

'You are out there, my friend,' said Roland Græme, 'I have my own reasons for being a friend to the Seytons.'

'They must have been very secret reasons, then,' answered Adam Woodcock, 'for I think I could have wagered you had never known one of the name; and I am apt to believe still that it was your unhallowed passion for that clashing of cold iron, which has as much charm for you as the clatter of a brass pan hath for a hive of bees, rather than any care either for Seyton or for Leslie, that persuaded you to thrust your fool's head into a quarrel that noways concerned you. But take this for a warning, my young master, that if you are to draw sword with every man who draws sword on the Highgate here, it will be scarce worth your while to sheathe bilbo again for the rest of your life, since, if I guess rightly, it will scarce endure on such terms for many hours — all which I leave to your serious consideration.'

'By my word, Adam, I honour your advice; and I promise you that I will practise by it as faithfully as if I were sworn apprentice to you, to the trade and mystery of bearing myself with all wisdom and safety through the new paths of life that I am about to be engaged in.'

'And therein you will do well,' said the falconer, 'and I do not quarrel with you, Master Roland, for having a grain over much spirit, because I know one may bring to the hand a wild hawk, which one never can a dunghill hen; and so betwixt two faults you have the best on't. But, besides your peculiar genius for quarrelling and lugging out your side companion, my dear Master Roland, you have also the gift of peering under every woman's muffler and screen, as if you expected to find an old acquaintance. Though, were you to spy one, I should be as much surprised at it, well wotting how few you have seen of these same wild-fowl, as I was at your taking so deep an interest even now in the Seyton.'

'Tush, man! nonsense and folly,' answered Roland Grame; 'I but sought to see what eyes these gentle hawks have got under their hood.'

'Ay, but it's a dangerous subject of inquiry,' said the falconer; 'you had better hold out your bare wrist for an eagle to perch upon. Look you, Master Roland, these pretty wild geese cannot be hawked at without risk: they have as many divings, boltings, and volleyings as the most gamesome quarry that falcon ever flew at. And besides, every woman of them is manned with her husband, or her kind friend, or her brother, or her cousin, or her sworn servant at the least. But you heed me not, Master Roland, though I know the game so well: your

eye is all on that pretty damsel who trips down the gate before us ; by my certes, I will warrant her a blithe dancer either in reel or revel — a pair of silver morisco bells would become these pretty ankles as well as the jesses would suit the fairest Norway hawk.'

'Thou art a fool, Adam,' said the page, 'and I care not a button about the girl or her ankles. But, what the foul fiend, one must look at something !'

'Very true, Master Roland Græme,' said his guide, 'but let me pray you to choose your objects better. Look you, there is scarce a woman walks this Highgate with a silk screen or a pearlin muffler, but, as I said before, she has either gentleman-usher before her, or kinsman, or lover, or husband, at her elbow, or it may be a brace of stout fellows with sword and buckler, not so far behind but what they can follow close. But you heed me no more than a goss-hawk minds a yellow yoldring.'

'O yes, I do — I do mind you indeed,' said Roland Græme ; 'but hold my nag a bit — I will be with you in the exchange of a whistle.' So saying, and ere Adam Woodcock could finish the sermon which was dying on his tongue, Roland Græme, to the falconer's utter astonishment, threw him the bridle of his jennet, jumped off horseback, and pursued down one of the closes or narrow lanes, which, opening under a vault, terminate upon the main street, the very maiden to whom his friend had accused him of showing so much attention, and who had turned down the pass in question.

'St. Mary — St. Magdalen — St. Benedict — St. Barnabas !' said the poor falconer, when he found himself thus suddenly brought to a pause in the midst of the Canongate, and saw his young charge start off like a madman in quest of a damsel whom he had never, as Adam supposed, seen in his life before — 'St. Satan and St. Beelzebub — for this would make one swear saint and devil — what can have come over the lad with a wanion ! And what shall I do the whilst ? He will have his throat cut, the poor lad, as sure as I was born at the foot of Roseberry Topping. Could I find some one to hold the horses ! But they are as sharp here north-away as in canny Yorkshire herself, and quit bridle, quit titt, as we say. An I could but see one of our folks now, a holly-sprig were worth a gold tassel ; or could I but see one of the Regent's men ; but to leave the horses to a stranger, that I cannot ; and to leave the place while the lad is in jeopardy, that I wonot.'

We must leave the falconer, however, in the midst of his distress, and follow the hot-headed youth who was the cause of his perplexity.

The latter part of Adam Woodcock's sage remonstrance had been in a great measure lost upon Roland, for whose benefit it was intended; because, in one of the female forms which tripped along the street, muffled in a veil of striped silk, like the women of Brussels at this day, his eye had discerned something which closely resembled the exquisite shape and spirited bearing of Catherine Seyton. During all the grave advice which the falconer was dinning in his ears, his eye continued intent upon so interesting an object of observation; and at length, as the damsel, just about to dive under one of the arched passages which afforded an outlet to the Canongate from the houses beneath (a passage graced by a projecting shield of arms, supported by two huge foxes of stone), had lifted her veil for the purpose perhaps of descrying who the horseman was who for some time had eyed her so closely, young Roland saw, under the shade of the silken plaid, enough of the bright azure eyes, fair locks, and blithe features to induce him, like an inexperienced and rash madcap, whose wilful ways never had been traversed by contradiction, nor much subjected to consideration, to throw the bridle of his horse into Adam Woodcock's hand, and leave him to play the waiting gentleman, while he dashed down the paved court after Catherine Seyton — all as aforesaid.

Women's wits are proverbially quick, but apparently those of Catherine suggested no better expedient than fairly to betake herself to speed of foot, in hopes of baffling the page's vivacity, by getting safely lodged before he could discover where. But a youth of eighteen, in pursuit of a mistress, is not so easily outstripped. Catherine fled across a paved court, decorated with large formal vases of stone, in which yews, cypresses, and other evergreens vegetated in sombre sullenness, and gave a correspondent degree of solemnity to the high and heavy building in front of which they were placed as ornaments, aspiring towards a square portion of the blue hemisphere, corresponding exactly in extent to the quadrangle in which they were stationed, and all around which rose huge black walls, exhibiting windows in rows of five stories, with heavy architraves over each, bearing armorial and religious devices.

Through this court Catherine Seyton flashed like a hunted doe, making the best use of those pretty legs which had

attracted the commendation even of the reflective and cautious Adam Woodcock. She hastened towards a large door in the centre of the lower front of the court, pulled the bobbin till the latch flew up, and ensconced herself in the ancient mansion. But if she fled like a doe, Roland Graeme followed with the speed and ardour of a youthful staghound, loosed for the first time on his prey. He kept her in view in spite of her efforts; for it is remarkable what an advantage in such a race the gallant who desires to see possesses over the maiden who wishes not to be seen — an advantage which I have known counter-balance a great start in point of distance. In short, he saw the waving of her screen, or veil, at one corner, heard the tap of her foot, light as that was, as it crossed the court, and caught a glimpse of her figure just as she entered the door of the mansion.

Roland Graeme, inconsiderate and headlong as we have described him, having no knowledge of real life but from the romances which he had read, and not an idea of checking himself in the midst of any eager impulse, possessed, besides, of much courage and readiness, never hesitated for a moment to approach the door through which the object of his search had disappeared. He too pulled the bobbin, and the latch, though heavy and massive, answered to the summons, and arose. The page entered with the same precipitation which had marked his whole proceeding, and found himself in a large hall, or vestibule, dimly enlightened by 'atticed casements of painted glass, and rendered yet dimmer through the exclusion of the sunbeams, owing to the height of the walls of those buildings by which the courtyard was enclosed. The walls of the hall were surrounded with suits of ancient and rusted armour, interchanged with huge and massive stone scutcheons, bearing double tressures, fleured and counter-fleured, wheat-sheaves, coronets, and so forth — things to which Roland Graeme gave not a moment's attention.

In fact, he only deigned to observe the figure of Catherine Seyton, who, deeming herself safe in the hall, had stopped to take breath after her course, and was reposing herself for a moment on a large oaken settle which stood at the upper end of the hall. The noise of Roland's entrance at once disturbed her; she started up with a faint scream of surprise, and escaped through one of the several folding-doors which opened into this apartment as a common centre. This door, which Roland Graeme instantly approached, opened on a large and well-lighted gallery,

at the upper end of which he could hear several voices, and the noise of hasty steps approaching towards the hall, or vestibule. A little recalled to sober thought by an appearance of serious danger, he was deliberating whether he should stand fast or retire, when Catherine Seyton re-entered from a side door, running towards him with as much speed as a few minutes since she had fled from him.

'Oh, what mischief brought you hither?' she said. 'Fly — fly, or you are a dead man; or stay — they come — flight is impossible; say you came to ask for Lord Seyton.'

She sprung from him and disappeared through the door by which she had made her second appearance; and, at the same instant, a pair of large folding-doors at the upper end of the gallery flew open with vehemence, and six or seven young gentlemen, richly dressed, pressed forward into the apartment, having, for the greater part, their swords drawn.

'Who is it,' said one, 'dare intrude on us in our own mansion?'

'Cut him to pieces,' said another; 'let him pay for this day's insolence and violence; he is some follower of the Rothses.'

'No, by St. Mary,' said another; 'he is a follower of the arch-fiend and ennobled clown, Halbert Glendinning, who takes the style of Avenel — once a church-vassal, now a pillager of the church.'

'It is so,' said a fourth; 'I know him by the holly-sprig, which is their cognizance. Secure the door; he must answer for this insolence.'

Two of the gallants, hastily drawing their weapons, passed on to the door by which Roland had entered the hall, and stationed themselves there as if to prevent his escape. The others advanced on Grame, who had just sense enough to perceive that any attempt at resistance would be alike fruitless and imprudent. At once, and by various voices, none of which sounded amicably, the page was required to say who he was, whence he came, his name, his errand, and who sent him hither. The number of the questions demanded of him at once afforded a momentary apology for his remaining silent, and ere that brief truce had elapsed a personage entered the hall, at whose appearance those who had gathered fiercely around Roland fell back with respect.

This was a tall man, whose dark hair was already grizzled, though his eye and haughty features retained all the animation of youth. The upper part of his person was undressed to his

Holland shirt, whose ample folds were stained with blood. But he wore a mantle of crimson, lined with rich fur, cast around him, which supplied the deficiency of his dress. On his head he had a crimson velvet bonnet, looped up on one side with a small golden chain of many links, which, going thrice around the hat, was fastened by a medal, agreeable to the fashion amongst the grandees of the time.

'Whom have you here, sons and kinsmen,' said he, 'around whom you crowd thus roughly? Know you not that the shelter of this roof should secure every one fair treatment who shall come hither either in fair peace or in open and manly hostility?'

'But ~~he~~ my lord,' answered one of the youths, 'is a knave who comes on treacherous espial!'

'I deny the charge,' said Roland Græme, boldly; 'I came to inquire after my Lord Seyton.'

'A likely tale,' answered his accusers, 'in the mouth of a follower of Glendinning.'

'Stay, young men,' said the Lord Seyton, for it was that nobleman himself, 'let me look at this youth. By Heaven, it is the very same who came so boldly to my side not very many minutes since, when some of my own knaves bore themselves with more respect to their own worshipful safety than to mine! Stand back from him, for he well deserves honour and a friendly welcome at your hands, instead of this rough treatment.'

They fell back on all sides, obedient to Lord Seyton's commands, who, taking Roland Græme by the hand, thanked him for his prompt and gallant assistance, adding, that he nothing doubted 'the same interest which he had taken in his cause in the affray brought him hither to inquire after his hurt.'

Roland bowed low in acquiescence.

'Or is there anything in which I can serve you, to show my sense of your ready gallantry?'

But the page, thinking it best to abide by the apology for his visit which the Lord Seyton had so aptly himself suggested, replied, 'That to be assured of his lordship's safety had been the only cause of his intrusion. He judged,' he added, 'he had seen him receive some hurt in the affray.'

'A trifle,' said Lord Seyton; 'I had but stripped my doublet, that the chirurgeon might put some dressing on the paltry scratch, when these rash boys interrupted us with their clamour.'

Roland Græme, making a low obeisance, was now about to depart, for, relieved from the danger of being treated as a spy, he began to fear that his companion, Adam Woodcock, whom he had so unceremoniously quitted, would either bring him into some farther dilemma by venturing into the hotel in quest of him, or ride off and leave him behind altogether. But Lord Seyton did not permit him to escape so easily. 'Tarry,' he said, 'young man, and let me know thy rank and name. The Seyton has of late been more wont to see friends and followers shrink from his side than to receive aid from strangers; but a new world may come round, in which he may have the chance of rewarding his well-wishers.'

'My name is Roland Græme, my lord,' answered the youth, 'a page, who for the present is in the service of Sir Halbert Glendinning.'

'I said so from the first,' said one of the young men; 'my life I will wager that this is a shaft out of the heretic's quiver — a stratagem from first to last, to injeer into your confidence some espial of his own. They know how to teach both boys and women to play the intelligencers.'

'That is false, if it be spoken of me,' said Roland; 'no man in Scotland should teach me such a foul part!'

'I believe thee, boy,' said Lord Seyton, 'for thy strokes were too fair to be dealt upon an understanding with those that were to receive them. Credit me, however, I little expected to have help at need from one of your master's household; and I would know what moved thee in my quarrel, to thine own endangering?'

'So please you, my lord,' said Roland, 'I think my master himself would not have stood by and seen an honourable man borne to earth by odds, if his single arm could help him. Such at least is the lesson we were taught in chivalry at the Castle of Avenel.'

'The good seed hath fallen into good ground, young man,' said Seyton; 'but, alas! if thou practise such honourable war in these dishonourable days, when right is everywhere borne down by mastery, thy life, my poor boy, will be but a short one.'

'Let it be short, so it be honourable,' said Roland Græme; 'and permit me now, my lord, to commend me to your grace, and to take my leave. A comrade waits with my horse in the street.'

'Take this, however, young man,' said Lord Seyton,¹ undoing

¹ See Note 13.

from his bonnet the golden chain and medal, 'and wear it for my sake.'

With no little pride Roland Græme accepted the gift, which he hastily fastened around his bonnet, as he had seen gallants wear such an ornament, and, renewing his obeisance to the baron, left the hall, traversed the court, and appeared in the street, just as Adam Woodcock, vexed and anxious at his delay, had determined to leave the horses to their fate and go in quest of his youthful comrade. 'Whose barn hast thou broken next?' he exclaimed, greatly relieved by his appearance, although his countenance indicated that he had passed through an agitating scene.

'Ask me no questions,' said Roland, leaping gaily on his horse; 'but see how short time it takes to win a chain of gold,' pointing to that which he now wore.

'Now, God forbid that thou hast either stolen it or reft it by violence,' said the falconer; 'for, otherwise, I wot not how the devil thou couldst compass it. I have been often here, ay, for months at an end, and no one gave me either chain or medal.'

'Thou see'st I have got one on shorter acquaintance with the city,' answered the page; 'but set thine honest heart at rest: that which is fairly won and freely given is neither reft nor stolen.'

'Marry, hang thee, with thy fanfaron¹ about thy neck!' said the falconer; 'I think water will not drown nor hemp strangle thee. Thou hast been discarded as my lady's page, to come in again as my lord's squire; and, for following a noble young damsel into some great household, thou gettest a chain and medal, where another would have had the baton across his shoulders, if he missed having the dirk in his body. But here we come in front of the old abbey. Bear thy good luck with you when you cross these paved stones, and, by Our Lady, you may brag Scotland.'

As he spoke, they checked their horses, where the huge old vaulted entrance to the abbey or Palace of Holyrood crossed the termination of the street down which they had proceeded. The courtyard of the palace opened within this gloomy porch, showing the front of an irregular pile of monastic buildings, one wing of which is still extant, forming a part of the modern palace, erected in the days of Charles I.

At the gate of the porch the falconer and page resigned their

¹ See Note 14.

horses to the serving-man in attendance; the falconer commanding him, with an air of authority, to carry them safely to the stables. 'We follow,' he said, 'the Knight of Avenel. We must bear ourselves for what we are here,' said he in a whisper to Roland 'for every one here is looked on as they demean themselves; and he that is too modest must to the wall, as the proverb says; therefore, cock thy bonnet, man, and let us brook the causeway bravely.'

Assuming, therefore, an air of consequence corresponding to what he supposed to be his master's importance and quality, Adam Woodcock led the way into the courtyard of the Palace of Holyrood.

CHAPTER XVIII

The sky is clouded, Gaspard,
And the vex'd ocean sleeps a troubled sleep,
Beneath a lurid gleam of parting sunshine.
Such slumber hangs o'er discontented lands,
While factions doubt, as yet, if they have strength
To front the open battle.

Albion, a Poem.

THE youthful page paused on the entrance of the courtyard, and implored his guide to give him a moment's breathing-space. 'Let me but look around me, man,' said he; 'you consider not I have never seen such a scene as this before. And this is Holyrood — the resort of the gallant and gay, and the fair, and the wise, and the powerful!' 'Ay, marry, is it!' said Woodcock; 'but I wish I could hood thee as they do the hawks, for thou starest as wildly as if you sought another fray or another fanfaronade. I would I had thee safely housed, for thou lookest wild as a goss-hawk.'

It was indeed no common sight to Roland, the vestibule of a palace, traversed by its various groups — some radiant with gaiety, some pensive, and apparently weighed down by affairs concerning the state or concerning themselves. Here the hoary statesman, with his cautious yet commanding look, his furred cloak and sable pantoufles; there the soldier, in buff and steel, his long sword jarring against the pavement, and his whiskered upper lip and frowning brow looking an habitual defiance of danger which perhaps was not always made good; there again passed my lord's serving-man, high of heart and bloody of hand, humble to his master and his master's equals, insolent to all others. To these might be added, the poor suitor, with his anxious look and depressed mien; the officer, full of his brief authority, elbowing his betters, and possibly his benefactors, out of the road; the proud priest, who sought a better benefice; the proud baron, who sought a grant of church lands; the robber chief, who came to solicit a pardon for



HOLYROOD PALACE AND ARTHUR SEAT, EDINBURGH.

From a recent photograph.



the injuries he had inflicted on his neighbours; the plundered franklin, who came to seek vengeance for that which he had himself received. Besides, there was the mustering and disposition of guards and soldiers; the despatching of messengers, and the receiving them; the trampling and neighing of horses without the gate; the flashing of arms, and rustling of plumes, and jingling of spurs, within it. In short, it was that gay and splendid confusion in which the eye of youth sees all that is brave and brilliant, and that of experience much that is doubtful, deceitful, false, and hollow — hopes that will never be gratified, promises which will never be fulfilled, pride in the disguise of humility, and insolence in that of frank and generous bounty.

As, tired of the eager and enraptured attention which the page gave to a scene so new to him, Adam Woodcock endeavoured to get him to move forward, before his exuberance of astonishment should attract the observation of the sharp-witted denizens of the court, the falconer himself became an object of attention to a gay menial in a dark-green bonnet and feather, with a cloak of a corresponding colour, laid down, as the phrase then went, by six broad bars of silver lace, and welted with violet and silver. The words of recognition burst from both at once. 'What! Adam Woodcock at court!' and 'What! Michael Wing-the-Wind — and how runs the hackit greyhound bitch now!'

'The waur for the wear, like ourselves, Adam, — eight years this grass — no four legs will carry a dog for ever; but we keep her for the breed, and so she 'scapes Border doom. But why stand you gazing there? I promise you, my lord has wished for you, and asked for you.'

'My Lord of Murray asked for me, and he Regent of the kingdom too!' said Adam. 'I hunger and thirst to pay my duty to my good lord; but I fancy his good lordship remembers the day's sport on Carnwath Moor; and my Drummelzier falcon, that beat the hawks from the Isle of Man, and won his lordship a hundred crowns from the Southern baron whom they called Stanley.'

'Nay, not to flatter thee, Adam,' said his court friend, 'he remembers nought of thee, or of thy falcon either. He hath flown many a higher flight since that, and struck his quarry too. But come — come hither away; I trust we are to be good comrades on the old score.'

'What!' said Adam, 'you would have me crush a pot with

you? but I must first dispose of my eyas, where he will neither have girl to chase nor lad to draw sword upon.'

'Is the youngster such a one?' said Michael.

'Ay, by my hood, he flies at all game,' replied Woodcock.

'Then had he better come with us,' said Michael Wing-the-Wind; 'for we cannot have a proper carouse just now, only I would wet my lips, and so must you. I want to hear the news from St. Mary's before you see my lord, and I will let you know how the wind sits up pander.'

While he thus spoke, he led the way to a side door which opened into the court; and threading several dark passages with the air of one who knew the most secret recesses of the palace, conducted them to a small matted chamber, where he placed bread and cheese and a foaming flagon of ale before the falconer and his young companion, who immediately did justice to the latter in a hearty draught, which nearly emptied the measure. Having drawn his breath, and dashed the froth from his whiskers, he observed, that his anxiety for the boy had made him deadly dry.

'Mend your draught,' said his hospitable friend, again supplying the flagon from a pitcher which stood beside. 'I know the way to the buttery-bar. And now, mind what I say. This morning the Earl of Morton came to my lord in a mighty chafe.'

'What! they keep the old friendship, then?' said Woodcock.

'Ay, ay, man, what else?' said Michael; 'one hand must scratch the other. But in a mighty chafe was my Lord of Morton, who, to say truth, looketh on such occasions altogether uncanny, and, as it were, fiendish; and he says to my lord - for I was in the chamber taking orders about a cast of hawks that are to be fetched from Darnaway; they match your long-winged falcons, friend Adam.'

'I will believe that when I see them fly as high a pitch,' replied Woodcock, this professional observation forming a sort of parenthesis.

'However,' said Michael, pursuing his tale, 'my Lord of Morton, in a mighty chafe, asked my Lord Regent whether he was well dealt with - "For my brother," said he, "should have had a gift to be commendator of Kennaquhair, and to have all the temporalities erected into a lordship of regality for his benefit; and here," said he, "the false monks have had the insolence to choose a new abbot to put his claim in my brother's

way; and, moreover, the rascality of the neighbourhood have burnt and plundered all that was left in the abbey, so that my brother will not have a house to dwell in when he hath ousted the lazy hounds of priests." And my lord, seeing him chafed, said mildly to him, "These are shrewd tidings, Douglas, but I trust they be not true; for Halbert Glendinning went southward yesterday with a band of spears, and assuredly, had either of these chances happened, that the monks had presumed to choose an abbot, or that the abbey had been burnt, as you say, he had taken order on the spot for the punishment of such insolence, and had despatched us a messenger." And the Earl of Morton replied — Now I pray you, Adam, to notice that I say this out of love to you and your lord, and also for old comradeship; and also because Sir Halbert hath done me good, and may again; and also because I love not the Earl of Morton, as indeed more fear than like him — so then it were a foul deed in you to betray me. — "But," said the Earl to the Regent, "take heed, my lord, you trust not this Glendinning too far: he comes of churl's blood, which was never true to the nobles." By St. Andrew, these were his very words. "And besides," he said, "he hath a brother a monk in St. Mary's, and walks all by his guidance, and is making friends on the Border with Buccleuch and with Fernieherst,¹ and will join hand with them, were there likelihood of a new world." And my lord answered, like a free noble lord as he is: "Tush! my Lord of Morton, I will be warrant for Glendinning's faith; and for his brother, he is a dreamer, that thinks of nought but book and breviary; and if such hap have chanced as you tell of, I look to receive from Glendinning the cowl of a hanged monk, and the head of a riotous churl, by way of sharp and sudden justice." And my Lord of Morton left the place, and, as it seemed to me, somewhat malcontent. But since that time my lord has asked me more than once whether there has arrived no messenger from the Knight of Avenel. And all this I have told you, that you may frame your discourse to the best purpose, for it seems to me that my lord will not be well pleased if aught has happened like what my Lord of Morton said, and if your lord hath not ta'en strict orders with it.

There was something in this communication which fairly blanked the bold visage of Adam Woodcock, in spite of the reinforcement which his natural hardihood had received from the berry-brown ale of Holyrood.

¹ Both these Border chieftains were great friends of Queen Mary.

'What was it he said about a churl's head, that grim Lord of Morton?' said the discontented falconer to his friend.

'Nay, it was my Lord Regent, who said that he expected, if the abbey was injured, your knight would send him the head of the ringleader among the rioters.'

'Nay, but is this done like a good Protestant,' said Adam Woodcock, 'or a true Lord of the Congregation? We used to be their white-boys and darlings when we pulled down the convents in Fife and Perthshire.'

'Ay, but that,' said Michael, 'was when old mother Rome held her own, and her great folks were determined she should have no shelter for her head in Scotland. But, now that the priests are fled in all quarters, and their houses and lands are given to our grandees, they cannot see that we are working the work of reformation in destroying the palaces of zealous Protestants.'

'But I tell you St. Mary's is not destroyed!' said Woodcock, in increasing agitation; 'some trash of painted windows there were broken — things that no nobleman could have brooked in his house; some stone saints were brought on their marrow-bones, like old Widdrington at Chevy Chase; but as for fire-raising, there was not so much as a lighted lunt amongst us, save the match which the dragon had to light the burning tow withal, which he was to spit against St. George; nay, I had caution of that.'

'How! Adam Woodcock,' said his comrade, 'I trust thou hadst no hand in such a fair work? Look you, Adam, I were loth to terrify you, and you just come from a journey; but I promise you, Earl Morton hath brought you down a "maiden" from Halifax, you never saw the like of her; and she'll clasp you round the neck and your head will remain in her arms.'

'Pshaw!' answered Adam, 'I am too old to have my head turned by any maiden, them all. I know my Lord of Morton will go as far for a buxom lass as any one; but what the devil took him to Halifax all the way? and if he has got a gamester there, what hath she to do with my head?'

'Much — much!' answered Michael. 'Herod's daughter, who did such execution with her foot and ankle, danced not men's heads off more cleanly than this maiden of Morton.¹ 'Tis an axe, man — an axe which falls of itself like a sash window, and never gives the headsman the trouble to wield it.'

'By my faith, a shrewd device,' said Woodcock; 'Heaven keep us free on't.'

¹ See Note 15.

The page, seeing no end to the conversation betwixt these two old comrades, and anxious, from what he had heard, concerning the fate of the abbot, now interrupted their conference.

'Methinks,' he said, 'Adam Woodcock, thou hadst better deliver thy master's letter to the Regent; questionless he hath therein stated what has chanced at Kennaquhair, in the way most advantageous for all concerned.'

'The boy is right,' said Michael Wing-the-Wind, 'my lord will be very impatient.'

'The child hath wit enough to keep himself warm,' said Adam Woodcock, producing from his hawking-bag his lord's letter, addressed to the Earl of Murray, 'and for that matter so have I. So, Master Roland, you will e'en please to present this yourself to the Lord Regent; his presence will be better graced by a young page than by an old falconer.'

'Well said, canny Yorkshire!' replied his friend, 'and but now you were so earnest to see our good lord! Why, wouldst thou put the lad into the noose that thou mayest slip tether thyself? or dost thou think the maiden will clasp his fair young neck more willingly than thy old sunburnt weasand?'

'Go to,' answered the falconer; 'thy wit towers high an it could strike the quarry. I tell thee the youth has nought to fear: he had nothing to do with the gambol. A rare gambol it was, Michael, as madcaps ever played; and I had made as rare a ballad, if we had had the luck to get it sung to an end. But mum for that—*tace*, as I said before, is Latin for a candle. Carry the youth to the presence, and I will remain here, with bridle in hand, ready to strike the spurs up to the rowel-heads, in case the hawk flies my way. I will soon put Soltra Edge, I trow, betwixt the Regent and me, if he means me less than fair play.'

'Come on then, my lad,' said Michael, 'since thou must needs take the spring before canny Yorkshire.' So saying, he led the way through winding passages, closely followed by Roland Græme, until they arrived at a large winding stone stair, the steps of which were so long and broad, and at the same time so low, as to render the ascent uncommonly easy. When they had ascended about the height of one story, the guide stepped aside, and pushed open the door of a dark and gloomy ante-chamber; so dark, indeed, that his youthful companion stumbled, and nearly fell down upon a low step, which was awkwardly placed on the very threshold.

'Take heed,' said Michael Wing-the-Wind, in a very low tone of voice, and first glancing cautiously round to see if any one

listened — 'take heed, my young friend, for those who fall on these boards seldom rise again. Seest thou that,' he added, in a still lower voice, pointing to some dark crimson stains on the floor, on which a ray of light, shot through a small aperture, and traversing the general gloom of the apartment, fell with mottled radiance — 'seest thou that, youth? Walk warily, for men have fallen here before you.'

'What mean you?' said the page, his flesh creeping, though he scarce knew why. 'Is it blood?'

'Ay, ay,' said the domestic, in the same whispering tone, and dragging the youth on by the arm. 'Blood it is — but this is no time to question, or even to look at it. Blood it is, foully and fearfully shed, as foully and fearfully avenged. The blood,' he added, in a still more cautious tone, 'of Seignior David.'

Roland Grème's heart throbbed when he found himself so unexpectedly in the scene of Rizzio's slaughter — a catastrophe which had chilled with horror all even in that rude age, which had been the theme of wonder and pity through every cottage and castle in Scotland, and had not escaped that of Avenel. But his guide hurried him forward, permitting no further question, and with the manner of one who has already tampered too much with a dangerous subject. A tap which he made at a low door at one end of the vestibule was answered by a huissier, or usher, who, opening it cautiously, received Michael's intimation that a page waited the Regent's leisure, who brought letters from the Knight of Avenel.

'The council is breaking up,' said the usher; 'but give me the packet; his Grace the Regent will presently see the messenger.'

'The packet,' replied the page, 'must be delivered into the Regent's own hands; such were the orders of my master.'

The usher looked at him from head to foot, as if surprised at his boldness, and then replied, with some asperity, 'Say you so, my young master? Thou crowest loudly to be but a chicken, and from a country barn-yard too.'

'Were it a time or place,' said Roland, 'thou shouldst see I can do more than crow; but do your duty, and let the Regent know I wait his pleasure.'

'Thou art but a pert knave to tell me of my duty,' said the courtier in office; 'but I will find a time to show you you are out of yours; meanwhile, wait there till you are wanted.' So saying, he shut the door in Roland's face.

Michael Wing-the-Wind, who had shrunk from his youthful companion during this altercation, according to the established maxim of courtiers of all ranks, and in all ages, now transgressed their prudential line of conduct so far as to come up to him once more. 'Thou art a hopeful young springald,' said he, 'and I see right well old Yorkshire had reason in his caution. Thou hast been five minutes in the court, and hast employed thy time so well as to make a powerful and a mortal enemy out of the usher of the council-chamber. Why, man, you might almost as well have offended the deputy butler!'

'I care not what he is,' said Roland Græme; 'I will teach whomever I speak with to speak civilly to me in return. I did not come from Avenel to be browbeaten in Holyrood.'

'Bravo, my lad!' said Michael; 'it is a fine spirit if you can but hold it; but see, the door opens.'

The usher appeared, and, in a more civil tone of voice and manner, said that his Grace the Regent would receive the Knight of Avenel's message; and accordingly marshalled Roland Græme the way into the apartment, from which the council had been just dismissed, after finishing their consultations. There was in the room a long oaken table, surrounded by stools of the same wood, with a large elbow-chair, covered with crimson velvet at the head. Writing materials and papers were lying there in apparent disorder; and one or two of the privy-councillors who had lingered behind, assuming their cloaks, bonnets, and swords, and bidding farewell to the Regent, were departing slowly by a large door, on the opposite side to that through which the page entered. Apparently the Earl of Murray had made some jest, for the smiling countenances of the statesmen expressed that sort of cordial reception which is paid by courtiers to the condescending pleasantries of a prince.

The Regent himself was laughing heartily as he said, 'Farewell, my lords, and hold me remembered to the Cock of the North.'

He then turned slowly round towards Roland Græme, and the marks of gaiety, real or assumed, disappeared from his countenance as completely as the passing bubbles leave the dark mirror of a still profound lake into which a traveller has cast a stone; in the course of a minute his noble features had assumed their natural expression of deep and even melancholy gravity.

This distinguished statesman, for as such his worst enemies acknowledged him, possessed all the external dignity, as well as

almost all the noble qualities, which could grace the power that he enjoyed ; and had he succeeded to the throne as his legitimate inheritance, it is probable he would have been recorded as one of Scotland's wisest and greatest kings. But that he held his authority by the deposition and imprisonment of his sister and benefactress was a crime which those only can excuse who think ambition an apology for ingratitude. He was dressed plainly in black velvet, after the Flemish fashion, and wore in his high-crowned hat a jewelled clasp, which looped it up on one side, and formed the only ornament of his apparel. He had his poniard by his side, and his sword lay on the council table.

Such was the personage before whom Roland Græme now presented himself, with a feeling of breathless awe, very different from the usual boldness and vivacity of his temper. In fact, he was, from education and nature, forward, but not impudent, and was much more easily controlled by the moral superiority, arising from the elevated talents and renown of those with whom he conversed, than by pretensions founded only on rank or external show. He might have braved with indifference the presence of an earl, merely distinguished by his belt and coronet ; but he felt overawed in that of the eminent soldier and statesman, the wielder of a nation's power, and the leader of her armies. The greatest and wisest are flattered by the deference of youth, so graceful and becoming in itself ; and Murray took, with much courtesy, the letter from the hands of the abashed and blushing page, and answered with complaisance to the imperfect and half-muttered greeting which he endeavoured to deliver to him on the part of Sir Halbert of Avenel. He even paused a moment ere he broke the silk with which the letter was secured, to ask the page his name, so much he was struck with his very handsome features and form.

'Roland Graham,' he said, repeating the words after the hesitating page, 'what, of the Grahams of the Lennox ?'

'No, my lord,' replied Roland ; 'my parents dwelt in the Debateable Land.'

Murray made no farther inquiry ; but proceeded to read his despatches, during the perusal of which his brow began to assume a stern expression of displeasure, as that of one who found something which at once surprised and disturbed him. He sat down on the nearest seat, frowned till his eyebrows almost met together, read the letter twice over, and was then silent for several minutes. At length, raising his head, his eye encountered that of the usher, who in vain endeavoured to

exchange the look of eager and curious observation with which he had been perusing the Regent's features for that open and unnoticing expression of countenance which, in looking at all, seems as if it saw and marked nothing — a cast of look which may be practised with advantage by all those, of whatever degree, who are admitted to witness the familiar and unguarded hours of their superiors. Great men are as jealous of their thoughts as the wife of King Candaules was of her charms, and will as readily punish those who have, however involuntarily, beheld them in mental dishabille and exposure.

'Leave the apartment, Hyndman,' said the Regent, sternly, 'and carry your observation elsewhere. You are too knowing, sir, for your post, which, by special order, is destined for men of blunter capacity. So! now you look more like a fool than you did (for Hyndman, as may easily be supposed, was not a little disconcerted by this rebuke); keep that confused stare, and it may keep your office. Begone, sir!'

The usher departed in dismay, not forgetting to register, amongst his other causes of dislike to Roland Grame, that he had been the witness of this disgraceful chiding. When he had left the apartment, the Regent again addressed the page.

'Your name you say is Armstrong?'

'No,' replied Roland, 'my name is Grame, so please you — Roland Grame, whose forbears were designated of Heathergill, in the Debateable Land.'

'Ay, I knew it was a name from the Debateable Land. Hast thou any acquaintance in Edinburgh?'

'My lord,' replied Roland, willing rather to evade this question than to answer it directly, for the prudence of being silent with respect to Lord Seyton's adventure immediately struck him, 'I have been in Edinburgh scarce an hour, and that for the first time in my life.'

'What! and thou Sir Halbert Glendinning's page?' said the Regent.

'I was brought up as my lady's page,' said the youth, 'and left Avenel Castle for the first time in my life — at least since my childhood — only three days since.'

'My lady's page!' repeated the Earl of Murray, as if speaking to himself; 'it was strange to send his lady's page on a matter of such deep concernment. Morton will say it is of a piece with the nomination of his brother to be abbot; and yet in some sort an inexperienced youth will best serve the turn.'

What hast thou been taught, young man, in thy doughty apprenticeship !

'To hunt, my lord, and to hawk,' said Roland Græme.

'To hunt coneys, and to hawk at ouzels ?' said the Regent, smiling ; 'for such are the sports of ladies and their followers.'

Græme's cheek reddened deeply as he replied, not without some emphasis, 'To hunt red-deer of the first head, and to strike down herons of the highest soar, my lord, which, in Lothian speech, may be termed, for aught I know, coneys and ouzels ; also, I can wield a brand and couch a lance, according to our Border meaning ; in inland speech these may be termed water-flags and bulrushes.'

'Thy speech rings like metal,' said the Regent, 'and I pardon the sharpness of it for the truth. Thou knowest, then, what belongs to the duty of a man-at-arms !'

'So far as exercise can teach it, without real service in the field,' answered Roland Græme ; 'but our knight permitted none of his household to make raids, and I never had the good fortune to see a stricken field.'

'The good fortune !' repeated the Regent, smiling somewhat sorrowfully ; 'take my word, young man, war is the only game from which both parties rise losers.'

'Not always, my lord,' answered the page, with his characteristic audacity, 'if fame speaks truth.'

'How, sir ?' said the Regent, colouring in his turn, and perhaps suspecting an indiscreet allusion to the height which he himself had attained by the hap of civil war.

'Because, my lord,' said Roland Græme, without change of tone, 'he who fights well must have fame in life or honour in death ; and so war is a game from which no one can rise a loser.'

The Regent smiled and shook his head, when at that moment the door opened, and the Earl of Morton presented himself.

'I come somewhat hastily,' he said, 'and I enter unannounced, because my news are of weight. It is as I said : Edward Glendinning is named abbot, and ——'

'Hush, my lord !' said the Regent, 'I know it, but ——'

'And perhaps you knew it before I did, my Lord of Murray,' answered Morton, his dark red brow growing darker and redder as he spoke.

'Morton,' said Murray, 'suspect me not -- touch not mine honour ; I have to suffer enough from the calumnies of foes,

let me not have to contend with the unjust suspicions of my friends. We are not alone,' said he, recollecting himself, 'or I could tell you more.'

He led Morton into one of the deep embrasures which the windows formed in the massive wall, and which afforded a retiring-place for their conversing apart. In this recess, Roland observed them speak together with much earnestness, Murray appearing to be grave and earnest, and Morton having a jealous and offended air, which seemed gradually to give way to the assurances of the Regent.

As their conversation grew more earnest, they became gradually louder in speech, having perhaps forgotten the presence of the page, the more readily as his position in the apartment placed him out of sight, so that he found himself unwillingly privy to more of their discourse than he cared to hear. For, page though he was, a mean curiosity after the secrets of others had never been numbered amongst Roland's failings; and, moreover, with all his natural rashness, he could not but doubt the safety of becoming privy to the secret discourse of these powerful and dreaded men. Still, he could neither stop his ears nor with propriety leave the apartment; and while he thought of some means of signifying his presence, he had already heard so much that to have produced himself suddenly would have been as awkward, and perhaps as dangerous, as in quiet to abide the end of their conference. What he overheard, however, was but an imperfect part of their communication; and although an expert politician, acquainted with the circumstances of the times, would have had little difficulty in tracing the meaning, yet Roland Grame could only form very general and vague conjectures as to the import of their discourse.

'All is prepared,' said Murray, 'and Lindesay is setting forward. She must hesitate no longer; thou seest I act by thy counsel, and harden myself against softer considerations.'

'True, my lord,' replied Morton, 'in what is necessary to gain power you do not hesitate, but go boldly to the mark. But are you as careful to defend and preserve what you have won? Why this establishment of domestics around her? Has not your sister men and maidens enough to tend her, but you must consent to this superfluous and dangerous retinue?'

'For shame, Morton! a princess, and my sister, could I do less than allow her due tendance?'

'Ay,' replied Morton, 'even thus fly all your shafts — smartly enough loosened from the bow, and not unskilfully aimed,

but a breath of foolish affection ever crosses in the mid volley, and sways the arrow from the mark.'

'Say not so, Morton!' replied Murray; 'I have both dared and done——'

'Yes, enough to gain, but not enough to keep; reckon not that she will think and act thus. You have wounded her deeply both in pride and in power; it signifies nought that you would tent now the wound with unavailing salves: as matters stand with you, you must forfeit the title of an affectionate brother, to hold that of a bold and determined statesman.'

'Morton!' said Murray, with some impatience, 'I brook not these taunts; what I have done I have done; what I must farther do, I must and will; but I am not made of iron like thee, and I cannot but remember. Enough of this — my purpose holds.'

'And I warrant me,' said Morton, 'the choice of these domestic consolations will rest with——'

Here he whispered names which escaped Roland Graine's ear. Murray replied in a similar tone, but so much raised towards the conclusion of the sentence that the page heard these words — 'And of him I hold myself secure, by Glendinning's recommendation.'

'Ay, which may be as much trustworthy as his late conduct at the Abbey of St. Mary's: you have heard that his brother's election has taken place. Your favourite Sir Halbert, my lord of Murray, has as much fraternal affection as yourself.'

'By Heaven, Morton, that taunt demanded an unfriendly answer, but I pardon it, for your brother also is concerned; but this election shall be annulled. I tell you, Earl of Morton, while I hold the sword of state in my royal nephew's name, neither lord nor knight in Scotland shall dispute my authority; and if I bear with insults from my friends, it is only while I know them to be such, and forgive their follies for their faithfulness.'

Morton muttered what seemed to be some excuse, and the Regent answered him in a milder tone, and then subjoined, 'Besides, I have another pledge than Glendinning's recommendation for this youth's fidelity: his nearest relative has placed herself in my hands as his security, to be dealt withal as his doings shall deserve.'

'That is something,' replied Morton; 'but yet, in fair love and good-will, I must still pray you to keep on your guard. The foes are stirring again, as horse-flies and hornets become

busy so soon as the storm blast is over. George of Seyton was crossing the causeway this morning with a score of men at his back, and had a ruffle with my friends of the house of Leslie; they met at the Tron, and were fighting hard, when the provost, with his guard of partizans, came in thirdsman, and staved them asunder with their halberds, as men part dog and bear.'

'He hath my order for such interference,' said the Regent. 'Has any one been hurt?'

'George of Seyton himself, by black Ralph Leslie; the devil take the rapier that ran not through from side to side! Ralph has a bloody coxcomb, by a blow from a messan page whom nobody knew; Dick Seyton of Windygowl is run through the arm; and two gallants of the Leslies have suffered phlebotomy. This is all the gentle blood which has been spilled in the revel; but a yeoman or two on both sides have had bones broken and ears cropped. The hostler-wives, who are like to be the only losers by their miscarriage, have dragged the knaves off the street, and are crying a drunken coronach over them.'

'You take it lightly, Douglas,' said the Regent; 'these broils and feuds would shame the capital of the Great Turk, let alone that of a Christian and Reformed state. But, if I live, this gear shall be amended; and men shall say, when they read my story, that if it were my cruel hap to rise to power by the dethronement of a sister, I employed it, when gained, for the benefit of the commonweal.'

'And of your friends,' replied Morton; 'wherefore I trust for your instant order annulling the election of this lurdane abbot, Edward Glendinning.'

'You shall be presently satisfied,' said the Regent, and, stepping forward, he began to call 'So ho, Hyndman!' when suddenly his eye lighted on Roland Graeme. 'By my faith, Douglas,' said he, turning to his friend, 'here have been three at counsel!'

'Ay, but only two can keep counsel,' said Morton; 'the galliard must be disposed of.'

'For shame, Morton — an orphan boy! Hearken thee, my child. Thou hast told me some of thy accomplishments — canst thou speak truth?'

'Ay, my lord, when it serves my turn,' replied Graeme.

'It shall serve thy turn now,' said the Regent; 'and falsehood shall be thy destruction. How much hast thou heard or understood of what we two have spoken together?'

'But little, my lord,' replied Roland Graeme, boldly, 'which

met my apprehension, saying that it seemed to me as if in something you doubted the faith of the Knight of Avenel, under whose roof I was nurtured.'

'And what hast thou to say on that point, young man?' continued the Regent, bending his eyes upon him with a keen and strong expression of observation.

'That,' said the page, 'depends on the quality of those who speak against his honour whose bread I have long eaten. If they be my inferiors, I say they lie, and will maintain what I say with my baton; if my equals, still I say they lie, and will do battle in the quarrel, if they list, with my sword; if my superiors——' he paused.

'Proceed boldly,' said the Regent. 'What if thy superiors should aught that nearly touched your master's honour?'

'I would say,' replied Graeme, 'that he did ill to slander the absent, and that my master was a man who could render an account of his actions to any one who should manfully demand it of him to his face.'

'And it were manfully said,' replied the Regent. 'What thinkest thou, my Lord of Morton?'

'I think,' replied Morton, 'that if the young galliard resemble a certain ancient friend of ours as much in the craft of his disposition as he does in eye and in brow, there may be a wide difference betwixt what he means and what he speaks.'

'And whom meanest thou that he resembles so closely?' said Murray.

'Even the true and trusty Julian Avenel,' replied Morton.

'But this youth belongs to the Debateable Land,' said Murray.

'It may be so; but Julian was an outlying striker of venison, and made many a far cast when he had a fair doe in chase.'

'Pshaw!' said the Regent, 'this is but idle talk. Here, thou Hyndman — thou curiosity,' calling to the usher, who now entered, 'conduct this youth to his companion. You will both,' he said to Graeme, 'keep yourselves in readiness to travel on short notice.' And then motioning to him courteously to withdraw, he broke up the interview.

CHAPTER XIX

It is and is not — 't is the thing I sought for,
Have kneel'd for, pray'd for, risk'd my fame and life for,
And yet it is not — no more than the shadow
Upon the hard, cold, flat, and polish'd mirror
Is the warm, graceful, rounded, living substance
Which it presents in form and lineament.

Old Play.

THE usher, with gravity which ill concealed a jealous scowl, conducted Roland Grieme to a lower apartment, where he found his comrade, the falconer. The man of office then briefly acquainted them that this would be their residence till his Grace's further orders; that they were to go to the pantry, to the buttery, to the cellar, and to the kitchen, at the usual hours, to receive the allowances becoming their station — instructions which Adam Woodcock's old familiarity with the court made him perfectly understand. 'For your beds,' he said, 'you must go to the hostelry of St. Michael's, in respect the palace is now full of the domestics of the greater nobles.'

No sooner was the usher's back turned than Adam exclaimed, with all the glee of eager curiosity, 'And now, Master Roland, the news — the news; come, unbutton thy pouch and give us thy tidings. What says the Regent? Asks he for Adam Woodcock? And is all soldered up, or must the Abbot of Unreason strap for it?'

'All is well in that quarter,' said the page: 'and for the rest — But, hey-day, what! have you taken the chain and medal off from my bonnet?'

'And meet time it was, when you usher, vinegar-faced rogue that he is, began to inquire what Popish tramping you were wearing. By the mass, the metal would have been confiscated for conscience sake, like your other rattle-trap yonder at Avenel, which Mistress Lilius bears about on her shoes in the guise of a

pair of shoe-buckles. This comes of carrying Popish nicknackets about you.'

'The jade!' exclaimed Roland Græme, 'has she melted down my rosary into buckles for her clumsy hoofs, which will set off such a garnish nearly as well as a cow's might? But, hang her, let her keep them; many a dog's trick have I played old Liliās, for want of having something better to do, and the buckles will serve for a remembrance. Do you remember the verjuice I put into the comfits, when old Wingate and she were to breakfast together on Easter morning?'

'In troth do I, Master Roland; the major-domo's mouth was as crooked as a hawk's beak for the whole morning afterwards, and any other page in your room would have tasted the discipline of the porter's lodge for it. But my lady's favour stood between your skin and many a jerking. Lord send you may be the better for her protection in such matters!'

'I am at least grateful for it, Adam; and I am glad you put me in mind of it.'

'Well, but the news, my young master,' said Woodcock — 'spell me the tidings; what are we to fly at next? What did the Regent say to you?'

'Nothing that I am to repeat again,' said Roland Græme, shaking his head.

'Why, hey-day,' said Adam, 'how prudent we are become all of a sudden! You have advanced rarely in brief space, Master Roland. You have wellnigh had your head broken, and you have gained your gold chain, and you have made an enemy, Master Usher to wit, with his two legs like hawks' perches, and you have had audience of the first man in the realm, and bear as much mystery in your brow as if you had flown in the court-sky ever since you were hatched. I believe in my soul you would run with a piece of the egg-shell on your head like the curlews, which — I would we were after them again — we used to call whaups in the halidome and its neighbourhood. But sit thee down, boy; Adam Woodcock was never the lad to seek to enter into forbidden secrets — sit thee down, and I will go and fetch the vivers; I know the butler and the pantler of old.'

The good-natured falconer set forth upon his errand, busy-ing himself about procuring their refreshment; and during his absence Roland Græme abandoned himself to the strange, complicated, and yet heart-stirring reflections to which the events of the morning had given rise. Yesterday he was of neither mark nor likelihood, a vagrant boy, the attendant on a relative

of whose sane judgment he himself had not the highest opinion ; but now he had become, he knew not why, or wherefore, or to what extent, the custodier, as the Scotch phrase went, of some important state secret, in the safe keeping of which the Regent himself was concerned. It did not diminish from, but rather added to, the interest of a situation so unexpected that Roland himself did not perfectly understand wherein he stood committed by the state secrets in which he had unwittingly become participator. On the contrary, he felt like one who looks on a romantic landscape, of which he sees the features for the first time, and then obscured with mist and driving tempest. The imperfect glimpse which the eye catches of rocks, trees, and other objects around him adds double dignity to these shrouded mountains and darkened abysses, of which the height, depth, and extent are left to imagination.

But mortals, especially at the well-appetised age which precedes twenty years, are seldom so much engaged either by real or conjectural subjects of speculation but that their earthly wants claim their hour of attention. And with many a smile did our hero, so the reader may term him if he will, hail the reappearance of his friend Adam Woodcock, bearing on one platter a tremendous portion of boiled beef, and on another a plentiful allowance of greens, or rather what the Scotch call lang-kale. A groom followed with bread, salt, and the other means of setting forth a meal ; and when they had both placed on the oaken table what they bore in their hands, the falconer observed that, since he knew the court, it had got harder and harder every day to the poor gentlemen and yeomen retainers, but that now it was an absolute flaying of a flea for the hide and tallow. Such thronging to the wicket, and such churlish answers, and such bare beef-bones, such a shouldering at the buttery-hatch and cellarage, and nought to be gained beyond small insufficient single ale, or at best with a single 'straike' of malt to counterbalance a double allowance of water. 'By the mass, though, my young friend,' said he, while he saw the food disappearing fast under Roland's active exertions, 'it is not so well to lament for former times as to take the advantage of the present, else we are like to lose on both sides.'

So saying, Adam Woodcock drew his chair towards the table, unsheathed his knife (for every one carried that minister of festive distribution for himself), and imitated his young companion's example, who for the moment had lost his anxiety for

the future in the eager satisfaction of an appetite sharpened by youth and abstinence.

In truth, they made, though the materials were sufficiently simple, a very respectable meal at the expense of the royal allowance; and Adam Woodcock, notwithstanding the deliberate censure which he had passed on the household beer of the palace, had taken the fourth deep draught of the black-jack ere he remembered him that he had spoken in its dispraise. Flinging himself jollily and luxuriously back in an old Danske elbow-chair, and looking with careless glee towards the page, extending at the same time his right leg, and stretching the other easily over it, he reminded his companion that he had not yet heard the ballad which he had made for the Abbot of Unreason's revel. And accordingly he struck merrily up with

‘The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Has blinded us full lang——’

Roland Græme, who felt no great delight, as may be supposed, in the falconer's satire, considering its subject, began to snatch up his mantle and fling it around his shoulders, an action which instantly interrupted the ditty of Adam Woodcock.

‘Where the vengeance are you going now,’ he said, ‘thou restless boy? Thou hast quicksilver in the veins of thee to a certainty, and canst no more abide any dounce and sensible communing than a hoodless hawk would keep perched on my wrist!’

‘Why, Adam,’ replied the page, ‘if you must needs know, I am about to take a walk and look at this fair city. One may as well be still mewed up in the old castle of the lake, if one is to sit the livelong night between four walls, and hearken to old ballads.’

‘It is a new ballad, the Lord help thee!’ replied Adam, ‘and that one of the best that ever was matched with a rousing chorus.’

‘Be it so,’ said the page, ‘I will hear it another day, when the rain is dashing against the windows, and there is neither steed stamping, nor spur jingling, nor feather waving in the neighbourhood, to mar my marking it well. But, even now, I want to be in the world, and to look about me.’

‘But the never a stride shall you go without me,’ said the falconer, ‘until the Regent shall take you whole and sound off my hand; and so, if you will, we may go to the hostelrie of St. Michael's, and there you will see company enough, but through the casement, mark you me; for as to rambling through the

street to seek Seytons and Leslies, and having a dozen holes drilled in your new jacket with rapier and poniard, I will yield no way to it.'

'To the hostelrie of St. Michael's, then, with all my heart,' said the page; and they left the palace accordingly, rendered to the sentinels at the gate, who had now taken their posts for the evening, a strict account of their names and business, were dismissed through a small wicket of the close-barred portal, and soon reached the inn or hostelrie of St. Michael, which stood in a large courtyard, off the main street, close under the descent of the Calton Hill. The place, wide, waste, and uncomfortable, resembled rather an Eastern caravansary, where men found shelter indeed, but were obliged to supply themselves with everything else, than one of our modern inns —

Where not one comfort shall to those be lost,
Who never ask, or never feel, the cost.

But still, to the inexperienced eye of Roland Græme, the bustle and confusion of this place of public resort furnished excitement and amusement. In the large room, into which they had rather found their own way than been ushered by mine host, travellers and natives of the city entered and departed, met and greeted, gamed or drank together, forming the strongest contrast to the stern and monotonous order and silence with which matters were conducted in the well-ordered household of the Knight of Avenel. Altercation of every kind, from brawling to jesting, was going on amongst the groups around them, and yet the noise and mingled voices seemed to disturb no one, and indeed to be noticed by no others than by those who composed the group to which the speaker belonged.

The falconer passed through the apartment to a projecting latticed window, which formed a sort of recess from the room itself; and having here ensconced himself and his companion, he called for some refreshments; and a tapster, after he had shouted for the twentieth time, accommodated him with the remains of a cold capon and a neat's tongue, together with a pewter stoup of weak French *vin-de-pays*. 'Fetch a stoup of brandy-wine, thou knave. We will be jolly to-night, Master Roland,' said he, when he saw himself thus accommodated, 'and let care come to-morrow.'

But Roland had eaten too lately to enjoy the good cheer; and feeling his curiosity much sharper than his appetite, he made it his choice to look out of the lattice, which overhung

a large yard surrounded by the stables of the hostelry, and fed his eyes on the busy sight beneath; while Adam Woodcock, after he had compared his companion to the Laird of MacFarlane's geese, who liked their play better than their meat,¹ disposed of his time with the aid of cup and trencher, occasionally humming the burden of his birth-strangled ballad, and beating time to it with his fingers on the little round table. In this exercise he was frequently interrupted by the exclamations of his companion, as he saw something new in the yard beneath to attract and interest him.

It was a busy scene, for the number of gentlemen and nobles who were now crowded into the city had filled all spare stables and places of public reception with their horses and military attendants. There were some score of yeomen dressing their own or their masters' horses in the yard — whistling, singing, laughing, and upbraiding each other, in a style of wit which the good order of Avenel Castle rendered strange to Roland Graeme's ears. Others were busy repairing their own arms, or cleaning those of their masters. One fellow, having just bought a bundle of twenty spears, was sitting in a corner, employed in painting the white staves of the weapons with yellow and vermilion. Other lackeys led large staghounds, or wolf-dogs, of noble race, carefully muzzled to prevent accidents to passengers. All came and went, mixed together and separated, under the delighted eye of the page, whose imagination had not even conceived a scene so gaily diversified with the objects he had most pleasure in beholding; so that he was perpetually breaking the quiet reverie of honest Woodcock, and the mental progress which he was making in his ditty, by exclaiming, 'Look here, Adam — look at the bonny bay horse; St. Anthony, what a gallant forehand he hath got! And see the goodly grey, which yonder fellow in the frieze jacket is dressing as awkwardly as if he had never touched aught but a cow; I would I were nigh him to teach him his trade! And lo yon, Adam, the gay Milan armour that the yeoman is scouring, all steel and silver, like our knight's prime suit, of which old Wingate makes such account. And see to yonder pretty wench, Adam, who comes tripping through them all with her milk-pail; I warrant me she has had a long walk from the loaning; she has a stummel waistcoat, like your favourite Cicely Sunderland, Master Adam!'

'By my hood, lad,' answered the falconer, 'it is well for thee thou wert brought up where grace grew. Even in the Castle

¹ [See *The Monastery*. Note 10, p. 377.]

of Avenel thou wert a wild-blood enough ; but hadst thou been nurtured here, within a flight-shot of the court, thou hadst been the veriest crack-hemp of a page that ever wore feather in thy bonnet or steel by thy side ; truly, I wish it may end well with thee.'

'Nay, but leave thy senseless humming and drumming, old Adam, and come to the window ere thou hast drenched thy senses in the pint-pot there. See, here comes a merry minstrel with his crowd, and a wench with him, that dances with bells at her ankles ; and see, the yeomen and pages leave their horses and the armour they were cleaning, and gather round, as is very natural, to hear the music. Come, old Adam, we will thither too.'

'You shall call me "cutt" if I do go down,' said Adam ; 'you are near as good minstrelsy as the stroller can make, if you had but the grace to listen to it.'

'But the wench in the stammel waistcoat is stopping too, Adam ; by Heaven, they are going to dance ! Frieze jacket wants to dance with stammel waistcoat, but she is coy and recusant.'

Then suddenly changing his tone of levity into one of deep interest and surprise, he exclaimed, 'Queen of Heaven ! what is it that I see ?' and then remained silent.

The sage Adam Woodcock, who was in a sort of languid degree amused with the page's exclamations, even while he professed to despise them, became at length rather desirous to set his tongue once more a-going, that he might enjoy the superiority afforded by his own intimate familiarity with all the circumstances which excited in his young companion's mind so much wonderment.

'Well, then,' he said at last, 'what is it you do see, Master Roland, that you have become mute all of a sudden ?'

Roland returned no answer.

'I say, Master Roland Grieme,' said the falconer, 'it is manners in my country for a man to speak when he is spoken to.'

Roland Grieme remained silent.

'The murrain is in the boy,' said Adam Woodcock, 'he has stared out his eyes and talked his tongue to pieces, I think !'

The falconer hastily drank off his can of wine, and came to Roland, who stood like a statue, with his eyes eagerly bent on the courtyard, though Adam Woodcock was unable to detect amongst the joyous scenes which it exhibited aught that could deserve such devoted attention.

'The lad is mazed!' said the falconer to himself.

But Roland Græme had good reasons for his surprise, though they were not such as he could communicate to his companion.

The touch of the old minstrel's instrument, for he had already begun to play, had drawn in several auditors from the street, when one entered the gate of the yard whose appearance exclusively arrested the attention of Roland Græme. He was of his own age, or a good deal younger, and from his dress and bearing might be of the same rank and calling, having all the air of coxcombry and pretension which accorded with a handsome, though slight and low, figure and an elegant dress, in part hid by a large purple cloak. As he entered, he cast a glance up towards the windows, and, to his extreme astonishment, under the purple velvet bonnet and white feather, Roland recognised the features so deeply impressed on his memory, the bright and clustered tresses, the laughing full blue eyes, the well-formed eyebrows, the nose with the slightest possible inclination to be aquiline, the ruby lip, of which an arch and half-suppressed smile seemed the habitual expression — in short, the form and face of Catherine Seyton; in man's attire, however, and mimicking, as it seemed not unsuccessfully, the bearing of a youthful but forward page.

'St. George and St. Andrew!' exclaimed the amazed Roland Græme to himself, 'was there ever such an audacious quean! She seems a little ashamed of her mummery too, for she holds the lap of her cloak to her face, and her colour is heightened; but, Santa Maria, how she threads the throng, with as firm and bold a step as if she had never tied petticoat round her waist! Holy saints! she holds up her riding-rod as if she would lay it about some of their ears that stand most in her way; by the hand of my father! she bears herself like the very model of pagehood. Hey! what! sure she will not strike frieze jacket in earnest?' But he was not long left in doubt; for the lout whom he had before repeatedly noticed, standing in the way of the bustling page, and maintaining his place with clownish obstinacy or stupidity, the advanced riding-rod was, without a moment's hesitation, sharply applied to his shoulders, in a manner which made him spring aside, rubbing the part of the body which had received so unceremonious a hint that it was in the way of his betters. The party injured growled forth an oath or two of indignation, and Roland Græme began to think of flying downstairs to the assistance of the translated

Catherine; but the laugh of the yard was against frieze jacket, which indeed had, in those days, small chance of fair play in a quarrel with velvet and embroidery; so that the fellow, who was a menial in the inn, slunk back to finish his task of dressing the bonny grey, laughed at by all, but most by the wench in the stammel waistcoat, his fellow-servant, who, to crown his disgrace, had the cruelty to cast an applauding smile upon the author of the injury, while, with a freedom more like the milkmaid of the town than she of the plains, she accosted him with — 'Is there any one you want here, my pretty gentleman, that you seem in such haste?'

'I seek a sprig of a lad,' said the seeming gallant, 'with a sprig of holly in his cap, black hair, and black eyes, green jacket, and the air of a country coxcomb; I have sought him through every close and alley in the Canongate — the fiend gored him!'

'Why, God-a-mercy, nun!' muttered Roland Græme, much bewildered.

'I will inquire him presently out for your fair young worship,' said the wench of the inn.

'Do,' said the gallant squire, 'and if you bring me to him you shall have a groat to-night, and a kiss on Sunday when you have on a cleaner kirtle.'

'Why, God-a-mercy, nun!' again muttered Roland, 'this is a note above E La.'

In a moment after the servant entered the room, and ushered in the object of his surprise.

While the disguised vestal looked with unabashed brow, and bold and rapid glance of her eye, through the various parties in the large old room, Roland Græme, who felt an internal awkward sense of bashful confusion, which he deemed altogether unworthy of the bold and dashing character to which he aspired, determined not to be browbeaten and put down by this singular female, but to meet her with a glance of recognition so sly, so penetrating, so expressively humorous, as should show her at once he was in possession of her secret and master of her fate, and should compel her to humble herself towards him, at least into the look and manner of respectful and deprecating observance.

This was extremely well planned; but, just as Roland had called up the knowing glance, the suppressed smile, the shrewd, intelligent look which was to ensure his triumph, he encountered the bold, firm, and steady gaze of his brother or sister page,

who, casting on him a falcon glance, and recognising him at once as the object of his search, walked up with the most unconcerned look, the most free and undaunted composure, and hailed him with 'You, sir holly-top, I would speak with you.'

The steady coolness and assurance with which these words were uttered, although the voice was the very voice he had heard at the old convent, and although the features more nearly resembled those of Catherine when seen close than when viewed from a distance, produced, nevertheless, such a confusion in Roland's mind that he became uncertain whether he was not still under a mistake from the beginning; the knowing shrewdness which should have animated his visage faded into a sheepish bashfulness, and the half-suppressed but most intelligible smile became the senseless giggle of one who laughs to cover his own disorder of ideas.

'Do they understand a Scotch tongue in thy country, holly-top?' said this marvellous specimen of metamorphosis. 'I said I would speak with thee.'

'What is your business with my comrade, my young chieftain of the game?' said Adam Woodcock, willing to step in to his companion's assistance, though totally at a loss to account for the sudden disappearance of all Roland's usual smartness and presence of mind.

'Nothing to you, my old cock of the perch,' replied the gallant; 'go mind your hawks' castings. I guess by your bag and your gauntlet that you are squire of the body to a sort of kites.'

He laughed as he spoke, and the laugh reminded Roland so irresistibly of the hearty fit of risibility in which Catherine had indulged at his expense when they first met in the old nunnery, that he could scarce help exclaiming, 'Catherine Seyton, by Heavens!' He checked the exclamation, however, and only said, 'I think, sir, we two are not totally strangers to each other.'

'We must have met in our dreams, then,' said the youth; 'and my days are too busy to remember what I think on at nights.'

'Or apparently to remember upon one day those whom you may have seen on the preceding eve,' said Roland Graeme.

The youth in his turn cast on him a look of some surprise, as he replied, 'I know no more of what you mean than does the horse I ride on; if there be offence in your words, you shall find me as ready to take it as any lad in Lothian.'

'You know well,' said Roland, 'though it pleases you to use the language of a stranger, that with you I have no purpose to quarrel.'

'Let me do mine errand, then, and be rid of you,' said the page. 'Step hither this way, out of that old leathern fist's hearing.'

They walked into the recess of the window, which Roland had left upon the youth's entrance into the apartment. The messenger then turned his back on the company, after casting a hasty and sharp glance around to see if they were observed. Roland did the same, and the page in the purple mantle thus addressed him, taking at the same time from under his cloak a short but beautifully-wrought sword, with the hilt and ornaments upon the sheath of silver, massively chased and overgilded: 'I bring you this weapon from a friend, who gives it you under the solemn condition that you will not unsheathe it until you are commanded by your rightful sovereign. For your warmth of temper is known, and the presumption with which you intrude yourself into the quarrels of others; and, therefore, this is laid upon you as a penance by those who wish you well, and whose hand will influence your destiny for good or for evil. This is what I was charged to tell you. So if you will give a fair word for a fair sword, and pledge your promise, with hand and glove, good and well; and if not, I will carry back caliburn to those who sent it.'

'And may I not ask who these are?' said Roland Græme, admiring at the same time the beauty of the weapon thus offered him.

'My commission in no way leads me to answer such a question,' said he of the purple mantle.

'But if I am offended,' said Roland, 'may I not draw to defend myself?'

'Not *this* weapon,' answered the sword-bearer; 'but you have your own at command, and, besides, for what do you wear your poniard?'

'For no good,' said Adam Woodcock, who had now approached close to them, 'and that I can witness as well as any one.'

'Stand back, fellow,' said the messenger; 'thou hast an intrusive, curious face, that will come by a buffet if it is found where it has no concern.'

'A buffet, my young Master Malapert?' said Adam, drawing back, however; 'best keep down fist, or, by Our Lady, buffet will beget buffet!'

'Be patient, Adam Woodcock,' said Roland Græme; 'and let me pray you, fair sir, since by such addition you choose for the present to be addressed, may I not barely unsheathe this fair weapon, in pure simplicity of desire to know whether so fair a hilt and scabbard are matched with a befitting blade?'

'By no manner of means,' said the messenger; 'at a word, you must take it under the promise that you never draw it until you receive the commands of your lawful sovereign, or you must leave it alone.'

'Under that condition, and coming from your friendly hand, I accept of the sword,' said Roland, taking it from his hand; 'but credit me, that if we are to work together in any weighty emprise, as I am induced to believe, some confidence and openness on your part will be necessary to give the right impulse to my zeal. I press for no more at present, it is enough that you understand me.'

'I understand you!' said the page, exhibiting the appearance of unfeigned surprise in his turn. 'Renounce me if I do! Here you stand jiggeting, and sniggling, and looking cunning, as if there were some mighty natter of intrigue and common understanding betwixt you and me, whom you never set your eyes on before!'

'What!' said Roland Græme, 'will you deny that we have met before?'

'Marry that I will, in any Christian court,' said the other page.

'And will you also deny,' said Roland, 'that it was recommended to us to study each other's features well, that, in whatever disguise the time might impose upon us, each should recognise in the other the secret agent of a mighty work? Do not you remember that Sister Magdalen and Dame Bridget —'

The messenger here interrupted him, shrugging up his shoulders with a look of compassion — 'Bridget and Magdalen! why, this is madness and dreaming! Hark ye, Master Hollytop, your wits are gone on wool-gathering; comfort yourself with a caudle, thatch your brain-sick noddle with a woollen nightcap, and so God be with you!'

As he concluded this polite parting address, Adam Woodcock, who was again seated by the table on which stood the now empty can, said to him, 'Will you drink a cup, young man, in the way of courtesy, now you have done your errand, and listen

to a good song?' and without waiting for an answer, he commenced his ditty —

'The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded us full lang —'

It is probable that the good wine had made some innovation in the falconer's brain, otherwise he would have recollected the danger of introducing anything like political or polemical pleasantry into a public assemblage, at a time when men's minds were in a state of great irritability. To do him justice, he perceived his error, and stopped short so soon as he saw that the word 'Pope' had at once interrupted the separate conversations of the various parties which were assembled in the apartment; and that many began to draw themselves up, bridle, look big, and prepare to take part in the impending brawl; while others, more decent and cautious persons, hastily paid down their lawing, and prepared to leave the place ere bad should come to worse.

And to worse it was soon likely to come; for no sooner did Woodcock's ditty reach the ear of the stranger page, than, uplifting his riding-rod, he exclaimed, 'He who speaks irreverently of the Holy Father of the church in my presence is the cub of a heretic wolf-bitch, and I will switch him as I would a mongrel cur!'

'And I will break thy young pate,' said Adam, 'if thou darrest to lift a finger to me.' And then, in defiance of the young Drawcansir's threats, with a stout heart and dauntless accent, he again uplifted the stave,

'The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded —'

But Adam was able to proceed no farther, being himself unfortunately blinded by a stroke of the impatient youth's switch across his eyes. Enraged at once by the smart and the indignity, the falconer started up, and darkling as he was — for his eyes watered too fast to permit his seeing anything — he would soon have been at close grips with his insolent adversary, had not Roland Græme, contrary to his nature, played for once the prudent man and the peacemaker, and thrown himself betwixt them, imploring Woodcock's patience. 'You know not,' he said, 'with whom you have to do. And thou,' addressing the messenger, who stood scornfully laughing at Adam's rage, 'get thee gone, whoever thou art; if thou be'st what I guess

these, thou well knowest there are earnest reasons why thou shouldst.

'Thou hast hit it right for once, holly-top,' said the gallant, 'though I guess you drew your bow at a venture. Here, host, let this yeoman have a pottle of wine to wash the smart out of his eyes, and there is a French crown for him.' So saying, he threw the piece of money on the table, and left the apartment with a quick yet steady pace, looking firmly at right and left, as if to defy interruption, and snapping his fingers at two or three respectable burghers, who, declaring it was a shame that any one should be suffered to rant and ruffle in defence of the Pope, were labouring to find the hilts of their swords, which had got for the present unhappily entangled in the folds of their cloaks. But, as the adversary was gone ere any of them had reached his weapon, they did not think it necessary to unsheathe cold iron, but merely observed to each other, 'This is more than masterful violence, to see a poor man stricken in the face just for singing a ballad against the Whore of Babylon! If the Pope's champions are to be bangsters in our very change-houses, we shall soon have the old shavelings back again.'

'The provost should look to it,' said another, 'and have some five or six armed with partizans, to come in upon the first whistle to teach these gallants their lesson. For, look you, neighbour Logleather, it is not for decent householders like ourselves to be brawling with the godless grooms and pert pages of the nobles, that are bred up to little else save bloodshed and blasphemy.'

'For all that, neighbour,' said Logleather, 'I would have curried that youngster as properly as ever I curried a lamb's hide, had not the hilt of my bilbo been for the instant beyond my grasp; and before I could turn my girdle, gone was my master!'

'Ay,' said the others, 'the devil go with him, and peace abide with us; I give my rede, neighbours, that we pay the lawing, and be stepping homeward, like brother and brother, for old St. Giles's is tolling curfew, and the street grows dangerous at night.'

With that the good burghers adjusted their cloaks and prepared for their departure, while he that seemed the briskest of the three, laying his hand on his Andrea Ferrara, observed, 'That they that spoke in praise of the Pope on the Highgate of Edinburgh had best bring the sword of St. Peter to defend them.'

While the ill-humour excited by the insolence of the young aristocrat was thus evaporating in empty menace, Roland Greame had to control the far more serious indignation of Adam Woodcock. 'Why, man, it was but a switch across the mazzard; blow your nose, dry your eyes, and you will see all the better for it.'

'By this light, which I cannot see,' said Adam Woodcock, 'thou hast been a false friend to me, young man, neither taking up my rightful quarrel nor letting me fight it out myself.'

'Fy for shame, Adam Woodcock,' replied the youth, determined to turn the tables on him, and become in turn the counsellor of good order and peaceable demeanour — 'I say, fy for shame! Alas, that you will speak thus! Here are you sent with me, to prevent my innocent youth getting into snarles —'

'I wish your innocent youth were cut short with a halter, with all my heart!' said Adam, who began to see which way the admonition tended.

— 'And instead of setting before me,' continued Roland, 'an example of patience and sobriety becoming the falconer of Sir Halbert Glendinning, you quaff me off I know not how many flagons of ale, besides a gallon of wine, and a full measure of strong waters!'

'It was but one small pottle,' said poor Adam, whom consciousness of his own indiscretion now reduced to a merely defensive warfare.

'It was enough to pottle you handsomely, however,' said the page. 'And then, instead of going to bed to sleep off your liquor, must you sit singing your roistering songs about popes and pagans, till you have got your eyes almost switched out of your head; and but for my interference, whom your drunken ingratitude accuses of deserting you, yon galliard would have cut your throat, for he was whipping out a whinger as broad as my hand and as sharp as a razor. And these are lessons for an inexperienced youth! Oh, Adam! out upon you! — out upon you!'

'Marry, amen, and with all my heart,' said Adam; 'out upon my folly for expecting anything but impertinent railery from a page like thee, that, if he saw his father in a scrape, would laugh at him, instead of lending him aid!'

'Nay, but I will lend you aid,' said the page, still laughing; 'that is, I will lend thee aid to thy chamber, good Adam, where

thou shalt sleep off wine and ale, ire and indignation, and awake the next morning with as much fair wit as nature has blessed thee withal. Only one thing I will warn thee, good Adam, that henceforth and for ever, when thou railest at me for being somewhat hot at hand, and rather too prompt to out with poniard or so, thy admonition shall serve as a prologue to the memorable adventure of the switching of St. Michael's.

With such condoling expressions he got the crestfallen falconer to his bed, and then retired to his own pallet, where it was some time ere he could fall asleep. If the messenger whom he had seen were really Catherine Seyton, what a masculine virago and termagant must she be! and stored with what an inimitable command of insolence and assurance! The brass on her brow would furbish the front of twenty pages; 'and I should know,' thought Roland, 'what that amounts to. And yet, her features, her look, her light gait, her laughing eye, the art with which she disposed the mantle to show no more of her limbs than needs must be seen — I am glad she had at least that grace left — the voice, the smile — it must have been Catherine Seyton, or the devil in her likeness! One thing is good, I have silenced the eternal predications of that ass, Adam Woodcock, who has set up for being a preacher and a governor over me, so soon as he has left the hawks' mew behind him.'

And with this comfortable reflection, joined to the happy indifference which youth hath for the events of the morrow, Roland Græme fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER XX

Now have you rest me from my staff, my guide,
Who taught my youth, as men teach untamed falcons,
To use my strength discreetly — I am left
Of comrade and of counsel !

Old Play.

IN the grey of the next morning's dawn there was a loud knocking at the gate of the hostelry, and those without, proclaiming that they came in the name of the Regent, were instantly admitted. A moment or two afterwards, Michael Wing-the-Wind stood by the bedside of our travellers.

'Up! — up!' he said, 'there is no slumber where Murray hath work ado.'

Both sleepers sprung up, and began to dress themselves.

'You, old friend,' said Wing-the-Wind to Adam Woodcock, 'must to horse instantly, with this packet to the monks of Kennaquhair, and with this,' delivering them as he spoke, 'to the Knight of Avenel.'

'As much as commanding the monks to annul their election, I'll warrant me, of an abbot,' quoth Adam Woodcock, as he put the packets into his bag, 'and charging my master to see it done. To hawk at one brother with another is less than fair play, methinks.'

'Fash not thy beard about it, old boy,' said Michael, 'but betake thee to the saddle presently; for if these orders are not obeyed there will be bare walls at the kirk of St. Mary's, and it may be at the Castle of Avenel to boot; for I heard my Lord of Morton loud with the Regent, and we are at a pass that we cannot stand with him anent trifles.'

'But,' said Adam, 'touching the Abbot of Unreason — what say they to that outbreak? An they be shrewishly disposed, I were better pitch the packets to Satan, and take the other side of the Border for my bield.'

'Oh, that was passed over as a jest, since there was little harm

done. But, hark thee, Adam,' continued his comrade, 'if there were a dozen vacant abbacies in your road, whether of jest or earnest, reason or unreason, draw thou never one of their mitres over thy brows. The time is not fitting, man; besides, our maiden longs to clip the neck of a fat churchman.'

'She shall never sheer mine in that capacity,' said the falconer, while he knotted the kerchief in two or three double folds around his sunburnt bull-neck, calling out at the same time, 'Master Roland — Master Roland, make haste! we must back to perch and mew, and, thank Heaven more than our own wit, with our bones whole, and without a stab in the stomach.'

'Nay, but,' said Wing-the-Wind, 'the page goes not back with you: the Regent has other employment for him.'

'Saints and sorrows!' exclaimed the falconer. 'Master Roland Graeme to remain here, and I to return to Avenel! Why, it cannot be: the child cannot manage himself in this wide world without me, and I question if he will stoop to any other whistle than mine own; there are times I myself can hardly bring him to my lure.'

It was at Roland's tongue's end to say something concerning the occasion they had for using mutually each other's prudence; but the real anxiety which Adam evinced at parting with him took away his disposition to such ungracious raillery. The falconer did not altogether escape, however, for, in turning his face towards the lattice, his friend Michael caught a glimpse of it, and exclaimed, 'I prithee, Adam Woodcock, what hast thou been doing with these eyes of thine? They are swelled to the starting from the socket!'

'Nought in the world,' said he, after casting a deprecating glance at Roland Graeme, 'but the effect of sleeping in this d——d truckle without a pillow.'

'Why, Adam Woodcock, thou must be grown strangely dainty,' said his old companion; 'I have known thee sleep all night with no better pillow than a bush of ling, and start up with the sun as gleg as a falcon; and now thine eyes resemble ——'

'Tush, man, what signifies how mine eyes look now?' said Adam. 'Let us but roast a crab-apple, pour a pottle of ale on it, and bathe our throats withal, thou shalt see a change in me.'

'And thou wilt be in heart to sing thy jolly ballad about the Pope?' said his comrade.

'Ay, that I will,' replied the falconer, 'that is, when we have

left this quiet town five miles behind us, if you will take your hobby and ride so far on my way.

'Nay, that I may not,' said Michael; 'I can but stop to partake your morning draught, and see you fairly to horse; I will see that they saddle them, and toast the crab for thee, without loss of time.'

During his absence the falconer took the page by the hand. 'May I never hood hawk again,' said the good-natured fellow, 'if I am not as sorry to part with you as if you were a child of mine own, craving pardon for the freedom; I cannot tell what makes me love you so much, unless it be for the reason that I loved the vicious devil of a brown Galloway nag, whom my master the knight called Satan, till Master Warden changed his name to Seyton; for he said it was over boldness to call a beast after the King of Darkness —'

'And,' said the page, 'it was over boldness in him, I trow, to call a vicious brute after a noble family.'

'Well,' proceeded Adam, 'Seyton or Satan, I loved that nag over every other horse in the stable. There was no sleeping on his back: he was for ever fidgeting, bolting, rearing, biting, kicking, and giving you work to do, and maybe the measure of your neck on the heather to the boot of it all. And I think I love you better than any lad in the castle for the self-same qualities.'

'Thanks — thanks, kind Adam. I regard myself bound to you for the good estimation in which you hold me.'

'Nay, interrupt me not,' said the falconer; 'Satan was a good nag. But, I say, I think I shall call the two eyases after you — the one Roland and the other Græme; and, while Adam Woodcock lives, be sure you have a friend. Here is to thee, my dear son.'

Roland most heartily returned the grasp of the hand, and Woodcock, having taken a deep draught, continued his farewell speech.

'There are three things I warn you against, Roland, now that you are to tread this weary world without my experience to assist you. In the first place, never draw dagger on slight occasion: every man's doublet is not so well stuffed as a certain abbot's that you wot of. Secondly, fly not at every pretty girl, like a merlin at a thrush; you will not always win a gold chain for your labour; and, by the way, here I return to you your fustiana; keep it close, it is weighty, and may benefit you at a pinch more ways than one. Thirdly, and to conclude, as our

worthy preacher says, beware of the pottle-pot : it has drenched the judgment of wiser men than you. I could bring some instances of it, but I daresay it needeth not ; for if you should forget your own mishaps, you will scarce fail to remember mine. And so farewell, my dear son.'

Roland returned his good wishes, and failed not to send his humble duty to his kind lady, charging the falconer at the same time to express his regret that he should have offended her, and his determination so to bear him in the world that she would not be ashamed of the generous protection she had afforded him.

The falconer embraced his young friend, mounted his stout, round-made, trotting nag, which the serving-man who had attended him held ready at the door, and took the road to the southward. A sullen and heavy sound echoed from the horse's feet, as if indicating the sorrow of the good-natured rider. Every hoof-tread seemed to tap upon Roland's heart as he heard his comrade withdraw with so little of his usual alert activity, and felt that he was once more alone in the world.

He was roused from his reverie by Michael Wing-the-Wind, who reminded him that it was necessary they should instantly return to the palace, as my Lord Regent went to the sessions early in the morning. They went thither accordingly, and Wing-the-Wind, a favourite old domestic, who was admitted nearer to the Regent's person and privacy than many whose posts were more ostensible, soon introduced Græme into a small matted chamber, where he had an audience of the present head of the troubled state of Scotland. The Earl of Murray was clad in a sad-coloured morning-gown, with a cap and slippers of the same cloth ; but, even in this easy dishabille, held his sheathed rapier in his hand — a precaution which he adopted when receiving strangers, rather in compliance with the earnest remonstrances of his friends and partizans than from any personal apprehensions of his own. He answered with a silent nod the respectful obeisance of the page, and took one or two turns through the small apartment in silence, fixing his keen eye on Roland, as if he wished to penetrate into his very soul. At length he broke silence.

'Your name is, I think, Julian Græme ?'

'Roland Græme, my lord — not Julian,' replied the page.

'Right — I was misled by some trick of my memory. Roland Græme, from the Debateable Land. Roland, thou knowest the duties which belong to a lady's service ?'

'I should know them, my lord,' replied Roland, 'having been bred so near the person of my Lady of Avenel; but I trust never more to practise them, as the knight hath promised ——'

'Be silent, young man,' said the Regent; 'I am to speak, and you to hear and obey. It is necessary that, for some space at least, you shall again enter into the service of a lady, who in rank hath no equal in Scotland; and this service accomplished, I give thee my word as knight and prince that it shall open to you a course of ambition such as may well gratify the aspiring wishes of one whom circumstances entitle to entertain much higher views than thou. I will take thee into my household and near to my person, or, at your own choice, I will give you the command of a foot-company; either is a preferment which the proudest laird in the land might be glad to ensure for a second son.'

'May I presume to ask, my lord,' said Roland, observing the Earl paused for a reply, 'to whom my poor services are in the first place destined?'

'You will be told hereafter,' said the Regent; and then, as if overcoming some internal reluctance to speak further himself, he added, 'or why should I not myself tell you that you are about to enter into the service of a most illustrious — most unhappy, lady — into the service of Mary of Scotland.'

'Of the Queen, my lord?' said the page, unable to repress his surprise.

'Of her who was the Queen!' said Murray, with a singular mixture of displeasure and embarrassment in his tone of voice. 'You must be aware, young man, that her son reigns in her stead.'

He sighed from an emotion partly natural, perhaps, and partly assumed.

'And am I to attend upon her Grace in her place of imprisonment, my lord?' again demanded the page, with a straightforward and hardy simplicity which somewhat disconcerted the sage and powerful statesman.

'She is not imprisoned,' answered Murray, angrily, 'God forbid she should: she is only sequestered from state affairs, and from the business of the public, until the world be so effectually settled that she may enjoy her natural and uncontrolled freedom, without her royal disposition being exposed to the practices of wicked and designing men. It is for this purpose,' he added, 'that, while she is to be furnished, as right is,

with such attendance as may befit her present secluded state, it becomes necessary that those placed around her are persons on whose prudence I can have reliance. You see, therefore, you are at once called on to discharge an office most honourable in itself, and so to discharge it that you may make a friend of the Regent of Scotland. Thou art, I have been told, a singularly apprehensive youth; and I perceive by thy look that thou dost already understand what I would say on this matter. In this schedule your particular points of duty are set down at length; but the sum required of you is fidelity — I mean fidelity to myself and to the state. You are, therefore, to watch every attempt which is made, or inclination displayed, to open any communication with any of the lords who have become banders in the west — with Hamilton, Seyton, with Fleming, or the like. It is true that my gracious sister, reflecting upon the ill chances that have happened to the state of this poor kingdom, from evil counsellors who have abused her royal nature in time past, hath determined to sequester herself from state affairs in future. But it is our duty, as acting for and in the name of our infant nephew, to guard against the evils which may arise from any mutation or vacillation in her royal resolutions. Wherefore, it will be thy duty to watch, and report to our lady mother, whose guest our sister is for the present, whatever may infer a disposition to withdraw her person from the place of security in which she is lodged, or to open communication with those without. If, however, your observation should detect anything of weight, and which may exceed mere suspicion, fail not to send notice by an especial messenger to me directly, and this ring shall be thy warrant to order horse and man on such service. And now begone. If there be half the wit in thy head that there is apprehension in thy look, thou fully comprehendest all that I would say. Serve me faithfully, and sure as I am belted earl thy reward shall be great.

Roland Graeme made an obeisance, and was about to depart.

The Earl signed to him to remain. 'I have trusted thee deeply,' he said, 'young man, for thou art the only one of her suite who has been sent to her by my own recommendation. Her gentlewomen are of her own nomination: it were too hard to have barred her that privilege, though some there were who reckoned it inconsistent with sure policy. Thou art young and handsome. Mingle in their follies, and see they cover not deeper designs under the appearance of female levity; if they do mine, do thou countermine. For the rest, bear all decorum

and respect to the person of thy mistress : she is a princess, though a most unhappy one, and hath been a queen, though now, alas ! no longer such. Pay, therefore, to her all honour and respect consistent with thy fidelity to the King and me. And now, farewell ! Yet stay — you travel with Lord Lindesay, a man of the old world, rough and honest, though untaught ; see that thou offend him not, for he is not patient of raillery, and thou, I have heard, art a crack-halter.' 'This he said with a smile ; then added, 'I could have wished the Lord Lindesay's mission had been entrusted to some other and more gentle noble.'

'And wherefore should you wish that, my lord ?' said Morton, who even then entered the apartment ; 'the council have decided for the best ; we have had but too many proofs of this lady's stubbornness of mind, and the oak that resists the sharp steel axe must be riven with the rugged iron wedge. And this is to be her page ? My Lord Regent hath doubtless instructed you, young man, how you shall guide yourself in these matters ; I will add but a little hint on my part. You are going to the castle of a Douglas, where treachery never thrives : the first moment of suspicion will be the last of your life. My kinsman, William Douglas, understands no raillery, and if he once have cause to think you false, you will waver in the wind from the castle battlements ere the sun set upon his anger. And is the lady to have an almoner withal ?'

'Occasionally, Douglas,' said the Regent ; 'it were hard to deny the spiritual consolation which she thinks essential to her salvation.'

'You are ever too soft-hearted, my lord. What ! a false priest to communicate her lamentations, not only to our un-friends in Scotland, but to the Guises, to Rome, to Spain, and I know not where !'

'Fear not,' said the Regent, 'we will take such order that no treachery shall happen.'

'Look to it, then,' said Morton ; 'you know my mind respecting the wench you have consented she shall receive as a waiting-woman — one of a family which, of all others, has ever been devoted to her and inimical to us. Had we not been wary, she would have been purveyed of a page as much to her purpose as her waiting-damsel. I hear a rumour that an old mad Romish pilgrimer, who passes for at least half a saint among them, was employed to find a fit subject.'

'We have escaped that danger at least,' said Murray, 'and

converted it into a point of advantage by sending this boy of Glendinning's; and for her waiting-damsel, you cannot grudge her one poor maiden instead of her four noble Marys and all their silken train?

'I care not so much for the waiting-maiden,' said Morton, 'but I cannot brook the almoner: I think priests of all persuasions are much like each other. Here is John Knox, who made such a noble puller-down, is ambitious of becoming a setter-up, and a founder of schools and colleges out of the abbey lands, and bishops' rents, and other spoils of Rome, which the nobility of Scotland have won with their sword and bow, and with which he would endow new hives to sing the old drone.'

'John is a man of God,' said the Regent, 'and his scheme is a devout imagination.'

The sedate smile with which this was spoken left it impossible to conjecture whether the words were meant in approbation or in derision of the plan of the Scottish Reformer. Turning then to Roland Græme, as if he thought he had been long enough a witness of this conversation, he bade him get him presently to horse, since my Lord of Lindesay was already mounted. The page made his reverence, and left the apartment.

Guided by Michael Wing-the-Wind, he found his horse ready saddled and prepared for the journey in front of the palace porch, where hovered about a score of men-at-arms, whose leader showed no small symptoms of surly impatience.

'Is this the jackanape page for whom we have waited thus long?' said he to Wing-the-Wind. 'And my Lord Ruthven will reach the castle long before us!'

Michael assented, and added that the boy had been detained by the Regent to receive some parting instructions. The leader made an inarticulate sound in his throat, expressive of sullen acquiescence, and calling to one of his domestic attendants, 'Edward,' said he, 'take the gallant into your charge, and let him speak with no one else.'

He then addressed, by the title of Sir Robert, an elderly and respectable-looking gentleman, the only one of the party who seemed above the rank of a retainer or domestic, and observed that they must get to horse with all speed.

During this discourse, and while they were riding slowly along the street of the suburb, Roland had time to examine more accurately the looks and figure of the baron who was at their head.

Lord Lindesay of the Byres was rather touched than stricken

with years. His upright stature and strong limbs still showed him fully equal to all the exertions and fatigues of war. His thick eyebrows, now partially grizzled, lowered over large eyes full of dark fire, which seemed yet darker from the uncommon depth at which they were set in his head. His features, naturally strong and harsh, had their sternness exaggerated by one or two scars received in battle. These features, naturally calculated to express the harsher passions, were shaded by an open steel cap, with a projecting front, but having no visor, over the gorget of which fell the black and grizzled beard of the grim old baron, and totally hid the lower part of his face. The rest of his dress was a loose buff-coat, which had once been lined with silk and adorned with embroidery, but which seemed much stained with travel and damaged with cuts, received probably in battle. It covered a corslet which had once been of polished steel, fairly gilded, but was now somewhat injured with rust. A sword of antique make and uncommon size, framed to be wielded with both hands, a kind of weapon which was then beginning to go out of use, hung from his neck in a baldric, and was so disposed as to traverse his whole person, the huge hilt appearing over his left shoulder, and the point reaching wellnigh to the right heel, and jarring against his spur as he walked. This unwieldy weapon could only be unsheathed by pulling the handle over the left shoulder, for no human arm was long enough to draw it in the usual manner. The whole equipment was that of a rude warrior, negligent of his exterior even to misanthropical sullenness; and the short, harsh, haughty tone which he used towards his attendants belonged to the same unpolished character.

The personage who rode with Lord Lindesay at the head of the party was an absolute contrast to him in manner, form, and features. His thin and silky hair was already white, though he seemed not above forty-five or fifty years old. His tone of voice was soft and insinuating; his form thin, spare, and bent by an habitual stoop; his pale cheek was expressive of shrewdness and intelligence; his eye was quick though placid, and his whole demeanour mild and conciliatory. He rode an ambling nag, such as were used by ladies, clergymen, or others of peaceful professions; wore a riding habit of black velvet, with a cap and feather of the same hue, fastened up by a golden medal; and for show, and as a mark of rank rather than for use, carried a walking sword (as the short light rapiers were called), without any other arms, offensive or defensive.

The party had now quitted the town, and proceeded, at a steady trot, towards the west. As they prosecuted their journey, Roland Græme would gladly have learned something of its purpose and tendency, but the countenance of the personage next to whom he had been placed in the train discouraged all approach to familiarity. The baron himself did not look more grim and inaccessible than his feudal retainer, whose grisly beard fell over his mouth like the portcullis before the gate of a castle, as if for the purpose of preventing the escape of any word of which absolute necessity did not demand the utterance. The rest of the train seemed under the same taciturn influence, and journeyed on without a word being exchanged amongst them, more like a troop of Carthusian friars than a party of military retainers. Roland Græme was surprised at this extremity of discipline; for even in the household of the Knight of Avenel, though somewhat distinguished for the accuracy with which decorum was enforced, a journey was a period of license, during which jest and song, and everything within the limits of becoming mirth and pastime, were freely permitted. This unusual silence was, however, so far acceptable that it gave him time to bring any shadow of judgment which he possessed to council on his own situation and prospects, which would have appeared to any reasonable person in the highest degree dangerous and perplexing.

It was quite evident that he had, through various circumstances not under his own control, formed contradictory connexions with both the contending factions by whose strife the kingdom was distracted, without being properly an adherent of either. It seemed also clear that the same situation in the household of the deposed Queen, to which he was now promoted by the influence of the Regent, had been destined to him by his enthusiastic grandmother, Magdalen Græme; for on this subject the words which Morton had dropped had been a ray of light; yet it was no less clear that these two persons, the one the declared enemy, the other the enthusiastic votary, of the Catholic religion; the one at the head of the King's new government, the other, who regarded that government as a criminal usurpation, must have required and expected very different services from the individual whom they had thus united in recommending. It required very little reflection to foresee that these contradictory claims on his services might speedily place him in a situation where his honour as well as his life might be endangered. But it was not in Roland

Greame's nature to anticipate evil before it came, or to prepare to combat difficulties before they arrived. 'I will see this beautiful and unfortunate Mary Stewart,' said he, 'of whom we have heard so much, and then there will be time enough to determine whether I will be kingsman or queensman. None of them can say I have given word or promise to either of their factions; for they have led me up and down like a blind Billy, without giving me any light into what I was to do. But it was lucky that grim Douglas came into the Regent's closet this morning, otherwise I had never got free of him without plighting my troth to do all the Earl would have me, which seemed, after all, but foul play to the poor imprisoned lady, to place her page as an espial on her.'

Skipping thus lightly over a matter of such consequence, the thoughts of the hare-brained boy went a-wool-gathering after more agreeable topics. Now he admired the Gothic towers of Barnbougle, rising from the sea-beaten rock, and overlooking one of the most glorious landscapes in Scotland; and now he began to consider what notable sport for the hounds and the hawks must be afforded by the variegated ground over which they travelled; and now he compared the steady and dull trot at which they were then prosecuting their journey with the delight of weeping over hill and dale in pursuit of his favourite sports. As, under the influence of these joyous recollections, he gave his horse the spur, and made him execute a gambade, he instantly incurred the censure of his grave neighbour, who hinted to him to keep the pace, and move quietly and in order, unless he wished such notice to be taken of his eccentric movements as was likely to be very displeasing to him.

The rebuke and the restraint under which the youth now found himself brought back to his recollection his late good-humoured and accommodating associate and guide, Adam Woodcock; and from that topic his imagination made a short flight to Avenel Castle, to the quiet and unconfined life of its inhabitants, the goodness of his early protectress, not forgetting the denizens of its stables, kennels, and hawk-mews. In a brief space, all these subjects of meditation gave way to the resemblance of that riddle of womankind, Catherine Seyton, who appeared before the eye of his mind now in her female form, now in her male attire, now in both at once, like some strange dream, which presents to us the same individual under two different characters at the same instant. Her mysterious presence also recurred to his recollection — the sword which he now

wore at his side, and which he was not to draw, save by command of his legitimate sovereign ! But the key of this mystery he judged he was likely to find in the issue of his present journey.

With such thoughts passing through his mind, Roland Grame accompanied the party of Lord Lindesay to the Queen's Ferry, which they passed in vessels that lay in readiness for them. They encountered no adventure whatever in their passage, excepting one horse being lamed in getting into the boat — an accident very common on such occasions, until a few years ago, when the ferry was completely regulated. What was more peculiarly characteristic of the olden age was the discharge of a culverin at the party from the battlements of the old castle of Rosythe, on the north side of the ferry, the lord of which happened to have some public or private quarrel with the Lord Lindesay, and took this mode of expressing his resentment. The insult, however, as it was harmless, remained unnoticed and unavenged, nor did anything else occur worth notice until the band had come where Lochleven spread its magnificent sheet of waters to the beams of a bright summer's sun.

The ancient castle, which occupies an island nearly in the centre of the lake, recalled to the page that of Avenel, in which he had been nurtured. But the lake was much larger, and adorned with several islets besides that on which the fortress was situated ; and instead of being embosomed in hills like that of Avenel, had upon the southern side only a splendid mountainous screen, being the descent of one of the Lomond hills, and on the other was surrounded by the extensive and fertile plain of Kinross. Roland Grame looked with some degree of dismay on the water-girdled fortress, which then, as now, consisted only of one large donjon-keep, surrounded with a courtyard, with two round flanking towers at the angles, which contained within its circuit some other buildings of inferior importance. A few old trees, clustered together near the castle, gave some relief to the air of desolate seclusion ; but yet the page, while he gazed upon a building so sequestered, could not but feel for the situation of a captive princess doomed to dwell there, as well as for his own. 'I must have been born,' he thought, 'under the star that presides over ladies and lakes of water, for I cannot by any means escape from the service of the one or from dwelling in the other. But if they allow me not the fair freedom of my sport and exercise, they shall find it as hard to confine a wild drake as a youth who can swim like one.'

The band had now reached the edge of the water, and one of the party advancing displayed Lord Lindesay's pennon, waving it repeatedly to and fro, while that baron himself blew a clamorous blast on his bugle. A banner was presently displayed from the roof of the castle in reply to these signals, and one or two figures were seen busied as if unmooring a boat which lay close to the islet.

'It will be some time ere they can reach us with the boat,' said the companion of the Lord Lindesay; 'should we not do well to proceed to the town, and array ourselves in some better order, ere we appear before ——'

'You may do as you list, Sir Robert,' replied Lindesay. 'I have neither time nor temper to waste on such vanities. She has cost me many a hard ride, and must not now take offence at the threadbare cloak and soiled doublet that I am arrayed in. It is the livery to which she has brought all Scotland.'

'Do not speak so harshly,' said Sir Robert; 'if she hath done wrong, she hath dearly abied it; and in losing all real power, one would not deprive her of the little external homage due at once to a lady and a princess.'

'I say to you once more, Sir Robert Melville,' replied Lindesay, 'do as you will; for me, I am now too old to dink myself as a gallant to grace the bower of dames.'

'The bower of dames, my lord!' said Melville, looking at the rude old tower: 'is it yon dark and grated castle, the prison of a captive queen, to which you give so gay a name?'

'Name it as you list,' replied Lindesay; 'had the Regent desired to send an envoy capable to speak to a captive queen, there are many gallants in his court who would have courted the occasion to make speeches out of *Amadis of Gaul* or the *Mirror of Knightland*. But when he sent blunt old Lindesay, he knew he could speak to a misguided woman, as her former misadventure and present state render necessary. I sought not this employment; it has been thrust upon me; and I will not cumbersome myself with more form in the discharge of it than needs must be tacked to such an occupation.'

So saying, Lord Lindesay threw himself from horseback, and, wrapping his riding-cloak around him, lay down at lazy length upon the sward, to await the arrival of the boat, which was now seen rowing from the castle towards the shore. Sir Robert Melville, who had also dismounted, walked at short turns to and fro upon the bank, his arms crossed on his breast, often looking to the castle, and displaying in his countenance a

mixture of sorrow and of anxiety. The rest of the party sate like statues on horseback, without moving so much as the points of their lances, which they held upright in the air.

As soon as the boat approached a rude quay or landing-place near to which they had stationed themselves, Lord Lindesay started up from his recumbent posture, and asked the person who steered why he had not brought a larger boat with him to transport his retinue.

'So please you,' replied the boatman, 'because it is the order of our lady that we bring not to the castle more than four persons.'

'Thy lady is a wise woman,' said Lindesay, 'to suspect me of treachery! Or, had I intended it, what was to hinder us from throwing you and your comrades into the lake and filling the boat with my own fellows?'

The steersman, on hearing this, made a hasty signal to his men to back their oars, and hold off from the shore which they were approaching.

'Why, thou ass,' said Lindesay, 'thou didst not think that I meant thy fool's head serious harm? Hark thee, friend, with fewer than three servants I will go no whither; Sir Robert Melville will require at least the attendance of one domestic; and it will be at your peril and your lady's to refuse us admission, come hither as we are on matters of great national concern.'

The steersman answered with firmness, but with great civility of expression, that his orders were positive to bring no more than four into the island, but he offered to row back to obtain a revival of his orders.

'Do so, my friends,' said Sir Robert Melville, after he had in vain endeavoured to persuade his stubborn companion to consent to a temporary abatement of his train: 'row back to the castle, sith it will be no better, and obtain thy lady's orders to transport the Lord Lindesay, myself, and our retinue hither.'

'And hearken,' said Lord Lindesay, 'take with you this page, who comes as an attendant on your lady's guest. Dismount, sirrah,' said he, addressing Roland, 'and embark with them in that boat.'

'And what is to become of my horse?' said Grame; 'I am answerable for him to my master.'

'I will relieve you of the charge,' said Lindesay: 'thou wilt have little enough to do with horse, saddle, or bridle for ten

years to come. Thou mayest take the halter an thou wilt : it may stand thee in a turn.

'If I thought so,' said Roland —— but he was interrupted by Sir Robert Melville, who said to him, good-humouredly, 'Dispute it not, young friend : resistance can do no good, but may well run thee into danger.'

Roland Græme felt the justice of what he said, and, though neither delighted with the matter nor manner of Linde ay's address, deemed it best to submit to necessity, and to embark without further remonstrance. The men plied their oars. The quay, with the party of horse stationed near it, receded from the page's eyes, the castle and the islet seemed to draw near in the same proportion, and in a brief space he landed under the shadow of a huge old tree which overhung the landing-place. The steersman and Græme leaped ashore ; the boatmen remained lying on their oars ready for further service.

CHAPTER XXI

Could valour aught avail or people's love,
France had not wept Navarre's brave Henry slain ;
If wit or beauty could compassion move,
The Rose of Scotland had not wept in vain.

LEWIS, Elegy in a Royal Mausoleum.

AT the gate of the courtyard of Lochleven appeared the stately form of the Lady of Lochleven, a female whose early charms had captivated James V., by whom she became mother of the celebrated Regent Murray. As she was of noble birth, being a daughter of the house of Mar, and of great beauty, her intimacy with James did not prevent her being afterwards sought in honourable marriage by many gallants of the time, among whom she had preferred Sir William Douglas of Lochleven. But well has it been said, —

Our pleasant vices
Are made the whips to scourge us.

The station which the Lady of Lochleven now held as the wife of a man of high rank and interest, and the mother of a lawful family, did not prevent her nourishing a painful sense of degradation, even while she was proud of the talents, the power, and the station of her son, now prime ruler of the state, but still a pledge of her illicit intercourse. 'Had James done to her,' she said in her secret heart, 'the justice he owed her, she had seen in her son, as a source of unmixed delight and of unchastened pride, the lawful monarch of Scotland, and one of the ablest who ever swayed the sceptre. The house of Mar, not inferior in antiquity or grandeur to that of Drummond, would then have also boasted a queen among its daughters, and escaped the stain attached to female frailty, even when it has a royal lover for its apology.' While such feelings preyed on a bosom naturally proud and severe, they had a corresponding effect on her countenance, where, with the remains of great

beauty, were mingled traits indicative of inward discontent and peevish melancholy. It perhaps contributed to increase this habitual temperament, that the Lady Lochleven had adopted uncommonly rigid and severe views of religion, imitating in her ideas of Reformed faith the very worst errors of the Catholics, in limiting the benefit of the Gospel to those who profess their own speculative tenets.

In every respect, the unfortunate Queen Mary, now the compulsory guest, or rather prisoner, of this sullen lady, was obnoxious to her hostess. Lady Lochleven disliked her as the daughter of Mary of Guise, the legal possessor of those rights over James's heart and hand of which she conceived herself to have been injuriously deprived; and yet more so as the professor of a religion which she detested worse than paganism.

Such was the dame who, with stately mien, and sharp yet handsome features, shaded by her black velvet coif, interrogated the domestic who steered her barge to the shore, what had become of Lindesay and Sir Robert Melville. The man related what had passed, and she smiled scornfully as she replied, 'Fools must be flattered, not foughten with. Row back — make thy excuse as thou canst — say Lord Ruthven hath already reached this castle, and that he is impatient for Lord Lindesay's presence. Away with thee, Randal — yet stay, what galopin is that thou hast brought hither?'

'So please you, my lady, he is the page who is to wait upon —'

'Ay, the new male minion,' said the Lady Lochleven; 'the female attendant arrived yesterday. I shall have a well-ordered house with this lady and her retinue; but I trust they will soon find some others to undertake such a charge. Begone, Randal; and you (to Roland Grème), follow me to the garden.'

She led the way with a slow and stately step to the small garden, which, inclosed by a stone wall ornamented with statues, and an artificial fountain in the centre, extended its dull parterres on the side of the courtyard, with which it communicated by a low and arched portal. Within the narrow circuit of its formal and limited walks, Mary Stewart was now learning to perform the weary part of a prisoner, which, with little interval, she was doomed to sustain during the remainder of her life. She was followed in her slow and melancholy exercise by two female attendants; but in the first glance which Roland Grème bestowed upon one so illustrious by birth, so distinguished by her beauty, accomplishments, and

misfortunes, he was sensible of the presence of no other than the unhappy Queen of Scotland.

Her face, her form, have been so deeply impressed upon the imagination that, even at the distance of nearly three centuries, it is unnecessary to remind the most ignorant and uninformed reader of the striking traits which characterise that remarkable countenance, which seems at once to combine our ideas of the majestic, the pleasing, and the brilliant, leaving us to doubt whether they express most happily the queen, the beauty, or the accomplished woman. Who is there that, at the very mention of Mary Stewart's name, has not her countenance before him, familiar as that of the mistress of his youth, or the favourite daughter of his advanced age? Even those who feel themselves compelled to believe all, or much, of what her enemies laid to her charge, cannot think without a sigh upon a countenance expressive of anything rather than the foul crimes with which she was charged when living, and which still continue to shade, if not to blacken, her memory. That brow, so truly open and regal; those eyebrows, so regularly graceful, which yet were saved from the charge of regular insipidity by the beautiful effect of the hazel eyes which they overarched, and which seem to utter a thousand histories; the nose, with all its Grecian precision of outline; the mouth, so well-proportioned, so sweetly formed, as if designed to speak nothing but what was delightful to hear; the dimpled chin; the stately, swan-like neck — form a countenance the like of which we know not to have existed in any other character moving in that class of life where the actresses as well as the actors command general and undivided attention. It is in vain to say that the portraits which exist of this remarkable woman are not like each other; for, amidst their discrepancy, each possesses general features which the eye at once acknowledges as peculiar to the vision which our imagination has raised while we read her history for the first time, and which has been impressed upon it by the numerous prints and pictures which we have seen. Indeed, we cannot look on the worst of them, however deficient in point of execution, without saying that it is meant for Queen Mary; and no small instance it is of the power of beauty, that her charms should have remained the subject not merely of admiration, but of warm and chivalrous interest, after the lapse of such a length of time. We know that by far the most acute of those who, in latter days, have adopted the unfavourable view of Mary's character, longed, like the executioner before

his dreadful task was performed, to kiss the fair hand of her on whom he was about to perform so horrible a duty.

Dressed, then, in a deep mourning robe, and with all those charms of face, shape, and manner with which faithful tradition has made each reader familiar, Mary Stewart advanced to meet the Lady of Lochleven, who, on her part, endeavoured to conceal dislike and apprehension under the appearance of respectful indifference. The truth was, that she had experienced repeatedly the Queen's superiority in that species of disguised yet cutting sarcasm with which women can successfully avenge themselves for real and substantial injuries. It may be well doubted whether this talent was not as fatal to its possessor as the many others enjoyed by that highly gifted, but most unhappy, female; for, while it often afforded her a momentary triumph over her keepers, it failed not to exasperate their resentment; and the satire and sarcasm in which she had indulged were frequently retaliated by the deep and bitter hardships which they had the power of inflicting. It is well known that her death was at length hastened by a letter which she wrote to Queen Elizabeth, in which she treated her jealous rival and the Countess of Shrewsbury with the keenest irony and ridicule.

As the ladies met together, the Queen said, bending her head at the same time in return to the obeisance of the Lady Lochleven — 'We are this day fortunate: we enjoy the company of our amiable hostess at an unusual hour, and during a period which we have hitherto been permitted to give to our private exercise. But our good hostess knows well she has at all times access to our presence, and need not observe the useless ceremony of requiring our permission.'

'I am sorry my presence is deemed an intrusion by your Grace,' said the Lady of Lochleven. 'I came but to announce the arrival of an addition to your train,' motioning with her hand towards Roland Græme, 'a circumstance to which ladies are seldom indifferent.'

'Oh! I crave your ladyship's pardon; and am bent to the earth with obligations for the kindness of my nobles — or my sovereigns, shall I call them? — who have permitted me such a respectable addition to my personal retinue.'

'They have indeed studied, madam,' said the Lady of Lochleven, 'to show their kindness towards your Grace, something at the risk perhaps of sound policy, and I trust their doings will not be misconstrued.'

'Impossible!' said the Queen; 'the bounty which permits

the daughter of so many kings, and who yet is queen of the realm, the attendance of two waiting-women and a boy, is a grace which Mary Stewart can never sufficiently acknowledge. Why! my train will be equal to that of any country dame in this your kingdom of Fife, saving but the lack of a gentleman-usher and a pair or two of blue-coated serving-men. But I must not forget, in my selfish joy, the additional trouble and charges to which this magnificent augmentation of our train will put our kind hostess and the whole house of Lochleven. It is this prudent anxiety, I am aware, which clouds your brows, my worthy lady. But be of good cheer: the crown of Scotland has many a fair manor, and your affectionate son, and my no less affectionate brother, will endow the good knight your husband with the best of them, ere Mary should be dismissed from this hospitable castle from your ladyship's lack of means to support the charges.'

'The Douglasses of Lochleven, madam,' answered the lady, 'have known for ages how to discharge their duty to the state, without looking for reward, even when the task was both irksome and dangerous.'

'Nay! but, my dear Lochleven,' said the Queen, 'you are over-scrupulous: I pray you accept of a goodly manor; what should support the Queen of Scotland, in this her princely court, saving her own crown-lands; and who should minister to the wants of a mother, save an affectionate son like the Earl of Murray, who possesses so wonderfully both the power and inclination? Or said you it was the danger of the task which clouded your smooth and hospitable brow? No doubt, a page is a formidable addition to my body-guard of females; and I bethink me it must have been for that reason that my Lord of Lindesay refused even now to venture within the reach of a force so formidable, without being attended by a competent retinue.'

The Lady Lochleven started, and looked something surprised; and Mary, suddenly changing her manner from the smooth, ironical affectation of mildness to an accent of austere command, and drawing up at the same time her fine person, said, with the full majesty of her rank, 'Yes! Lady of Lochleven, I know that Ruthven is already in the castle, and that Lindesay waits on the bank the return of your barge to bring him hither along with Sir Robert Melville. For what purpose do these nobles come? and why am I not in ordinary decency apprised of their arrival?'

'Their purpose, madam,' replied the Lady of Lochleven,

'they must themselves explain ; but a formal annunciation were needless, where your Grace hath attendants who can play the espial so well.'

'Alas ! poor Fleming,' said the Queen, turning to the elder of the female attendants, 'thou wilt be tried, condemned, and gibbeted for a spy in the garrison, because thou didst chance to cross the great hall while my good Lady of Lochleven was parleying at the full pitch of her voice with her pilot Randal. Put black wool in thy ears, girl, as you value the wearing of them longer. Remember, in the Castle of Lochleven, ears and tongues are matters not of use, but for show merely. Our good hostess can hear, as well as speak, for us all. We excuse your further attendance, my lady hostess,' she said, once more addressing the object of her resentment, 'and retire to prepare for an interview with our rebel lords. We will use the ante-chamber of our sleeping apartment as our hall of audience. You, young man,' she proceeded, addressing Roland Græme, and at once softening the ironical sharpness of her manner into good-humoured raillery — 'you, who are all our male attendance, from our Lord High Chamberlain down to our least galopin, follow us to prepare our court.'

She turned, and walked slowly towards the castle. The Lady of Lochleven folded her arms, and smiled in bitter resentment, as she watched her retiring steps.

'The whole male attendance !' she muttered, repeating the Queen's last words, 'and well for thee had it been had thy train never been larger' ; then turning to Roland, in whose way she had stood while making this pause, she made room for him to pass, saying at the same time, 'Art thou already eaves-dropping ? follow thy mistress, minion, and, if thou wilt, tell her what I have now said.'

Roland Græme hastened after his royal mistress and her attendants, who had just entered a postern gate communicating betwixt the castle and the small garden. They ascended a winding stair as high as the second story, which was in a great measure occupied by a suite of three rooms, opening into each other, and assigned as the dwelling of the captive princess. The outermost was a small hall or ante-room, within which opened a large parlour, and from that again the Queen's bedroom. Another small apartment, which opened into the same parlour, contained the beds of the gentlewomen in waiting.

Roland Græme stopped, as became his station, in the outermost of these apartments, there to await such orders as might

be communicated to him. From the grated window of the room he saw Lindsay, Melville, and their followers disembark; and observed that they were met at the castle gate by a third noble, to whom Lindsay exclaimed, in his loud harsh voice, 'My Lord of Ruthven, you have the start of us!'

At this instant the page's attention was called to a burst of hysterical sobs from the inner apartment, and to the hurried ejaculations of the terrified females, which led him almost instantly to hasten to their assistance. When he entered, he saw that the Queen had thrown herself into the large chair which stood nearest the door, and was sobbing for breath in a strong fit of hysterical affection. The elder female supported her in her arms, while the younger bathed her face with water and with tears alternately.

'Hasten, young man! — said the elder lady, in alarm — 'fly — call in assistance; she is swooning!'

But the Queen ejaculated in a faint and broken voice, 'Stir not, I charge you! — call no one to witness, I am better — I shall recover instantly.' And, indeed, with an effort which seemed like that of one struggling for life, she sate up in her chair and endeavoured to resume her composure, while her features yet trembled with the violent emotion of body and mind which she had undergone. 'I am ashamed of my weakness, girls,' she said, taking the hands of her attendants; 'but it is over — and I am Mary Stewart once more. The savage tone of that man's voice — my knowledge of his insolence — the name which he named — the purpose for which they come, may excuse a moment's weakness, and it shall be a moment's only. She snatched from her head the curch, or cap, which had been disordered during her hysterical agony; shook down the thick clustered tresses of dark brown which had been before veiled under it; and, drawing her slender fingers across the labyrinth which they formed, she arose from the chair, and stood like the inspired image of a Grecian prophetess, in a mood which partook at once of sorrow and pride, of smiles and of tears. 'We are ill appointed,' she said, 'to meet our rebel subjects; but, as far as we may, we will strive to present ourselves as becomes their queen. Follow me, my maidens,' she said; 'what says thy favourite song, my Fleming? —

My maids, come to my dressing-bower,
And deck my nut-brown hair;
Where'er ye laid a plait before,
Look ye lay ten times mair.

Alas !' she added, when she had repeated with a smile these lines of an old ballad, 'violence has already robbed me of the ordinary decorations of my rank ; and the few that nature gave me have been destroyed by sorrow and by fear.' Yet, while she spoke thus, she again let her slender fingers stray through the wilderness of the beautiful tresses which veiled her kingly neck and swelling bosom, as if, in her agony of mind, she had not altogether lost the consciousness of her unrivalled charms. Roland Grème, on whose youth, inexperience, and ardent sense of what was dignified and lovely the demeanour of so fair and high-born a lady wrought like the charm of a magician, stood rooted to the spot with surprise and interest, longing to hazard his life in a quarrel so fair as that which Mary Stewart's must needs be. She had been bred in France — she was possessed of the most distinguished beauty — she had reigned a queen, and a Scottish queen, to whom knowledge of character was as essential as the use of vital air. In all these capacities Mary was, of all women on the earth, most alert at perceiving and using the advantages which her charms gave her over almost all who came within the sphere of their influence. She cast on Roland a glance which might have melted a heart of stone. 'My poor boy,' she said, with a feeling partly real, partly politic, 'thou art a stranger to us, sent to this doleful captivity from the society of some tender mother, or sister, or maiden, with whom you had freedom to tread a gay measure round the Maypole. I grieve for you ; but you are the only male in my limited household — wilt thou obey my orders ?'

'To the death, madam,' said Grème, in a determined tone.

'Then keep the door of mine apartment,' said the Queen — 'keep it till they offer actual violence, or till we shall be fitly arrayed to receive these intrusive visitors.'

'I will defend it till they pass over my body,' said Roland Grème, any hesitation which he had felt concerning the line of conduct he ought to pursue being completely swept away by the impulse of the moment.

'Not so, my good youth,' answered Mary — 'not so, I command thee. If I have one faithful subject beside me, much need, God wot, I have to care for his safety. Resist them but till they are put to the shame of using actual violence, and then give way, I charge you. Remember my commands.' And, with a smile expressive at once of favour and of authority, she turned from him, and, followed by her attendants, entered the bedroom.

The youngest paused for half a second ere she followed her companion, and made a signal to Roland Grames with her hand. He had been already long aware that this was Catherine Seyton — a circumstance which could not much surprise a youth of quick intellects, who recollected the sort of mysterious discourse which had passed betwixt the two matrons at the deserted nunnery, and on which his meeting with Catherine in this place seemed to cast so much light. Yet, such was the engrossing effect of Mary's presence, that it surmounted for the moment even the feelings of a youthful lover; and it was not until Catherine Seyton had disappeared that Roland began to consider in what relation they were to stand to each other.

'She held up her hand to me in a commanding manner,' he thought; 'perhaps she wanted to confirm my purpose for the execution of the Queen's commands; for I think she could scarce purpose to scare me with the sort of discipline which she administered to the groom in the frieze jacket and to poor Adam Woodcock. But we will see to that anon; meantime, let us do justice to the trust reposed in us by this unhappy Queen. I think my Lord of Murray will himself own that it is the duty of a faithful page to defend his lady against intrusion on her privacy.'

Accordingly, he stepped to the little vestibule, made fast, with lock and bar, the door which opened from thence to the large staircase, and then sat himself down to attend the result. He had not long to wait: a rude and strong hand first essayed to lift the latch, then pushed and shook the door with violence, and, when it resisted his attempt to open it, exclaimed, 'Undo the door there, you within!'

'Why, and at whose command,' said the page, 'am I to undo the door of the apartments of the Queen of Scotland?'

Another vain attempt, which made hinge and bolt jingle, showed that the impatient applicant without would willingly have entered altogether regardless of his challenge; but at length an answer was returned.

'Undo the door, on your peril: the Lord Lindesay comes to speak with the Lady Mary of Scotland.'

'The Lord Lindesay, as a Scottish noble,' answered the page, 'must await his sovereign's leisure.'

An earnest altercation ensued amongst those without, in which Roland distinguished the remarkably harsh voice of Lindesay in reply to Sir Robert Melville, who appeared to have been using some soothing language — 'No! no! no! I tell thee

no! I will place a petard against the door rather than be hauled by a profligate woman, and hearded by an insolent footboy.'

'Yet, at least,' said Melville, 'let me try fair means in the first instance. Violence to a lady would stain your scutcheon for ever. Or await till my Lord Ruthven comes.'

'I will await no longer,' said Lindsay; 'it is high time the business were done, and we on our return to the council. But thou mayest try thy fair play, as thou callest it, while I cause my train to prepare the petard. I came hither provided with as good gunpowder as blew up the Kirk of Field.'

'For God's sake, be patient,' said Melville; and, approaching the door, he said, as speaking to those within, 'Let the Queen know that I, her faithful servant, Robert Melville, do entreat her, for her own sake, and to prevent worse consequences, that she will undo the door, and admit Lord Lindsay, who brings a mission from the council of state.'

'I will do your errand to the Queen,' said the page, 'and report to you her answer.'

He went to the door of the bedchamber, and, tapping against it gently, it was opened by the elder lady, to whom he communicated his errand, and returned with directions from the Queen to admit Sir Robert Melville and Lord Lindsay. Roland Graeme returned to the vestibule, and opened the door accordingly, into which the Lord Lindsay strode, with the air of a soldier who has fought his way into a conquered fortress; while Melville, deeply dejected, followed him more slowly.

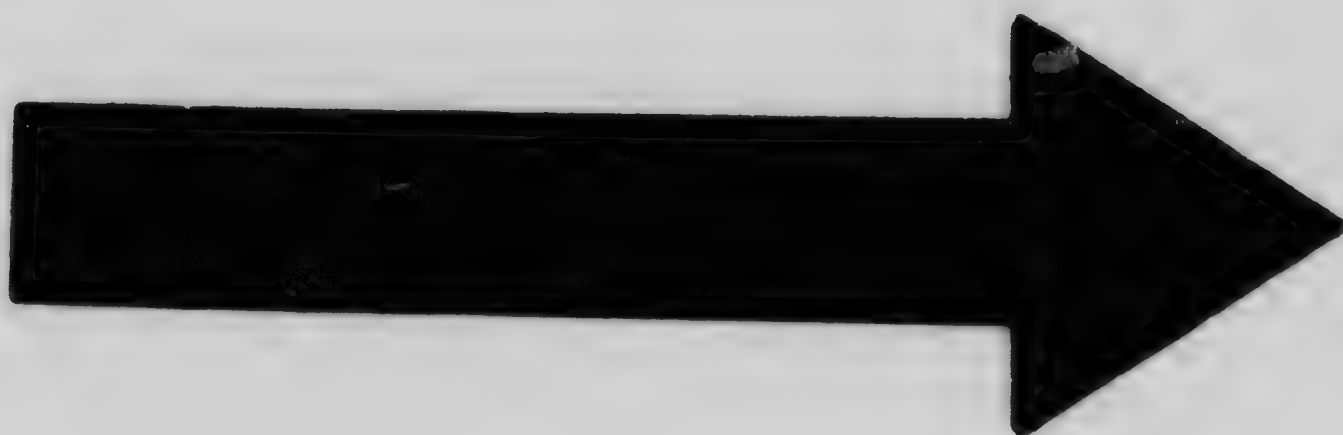
'I draw you to witness and to record,' said the page to this last, 'that, save for the especial commands of the Queen, I would have made good the entrance, with my best strength and my best blood, against all Scotland.'

'Be silent, young man,' said Melville, in a tone of grave rebuke: 'add not brands to fire; this is no time to make a flourish of thy boyish chivalry.'

'She has not appeared even yet,' said Lindsay, who had now reached the midst of the parlour or audience-room; 'how call you this trifling?'

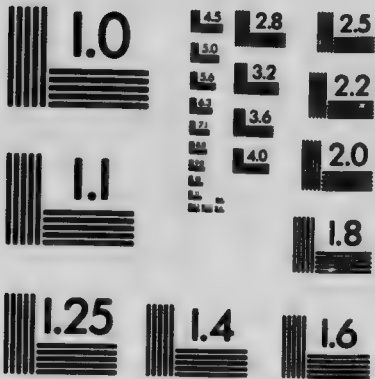
'Patience, my lord,' replied Sir Robert, 'time presses not; and Lord Ruthven hath not as yet descended.'

At this moment the door of the inner apartment opened, and Queen Mary presented herself, advancing with an air of peculiar grace and majesty, and seeming totally unruffled, either by the visit or by the rude manner in which it had been enforced. Her dress was a robe of black velvet; a small ruff,



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open in front, gave a full view of her beautifully-formed chin and neck, but veiled the bosom. On her head she wore a small cap of lace, and a transparent white veil hung from her shoulders over the long black robe, in large loose folds, so that it could be drawn at pleasure over the face and person. She wore a cross of gold around her neck, and had her rosary of gold and ebony hanging from her girdle. She was closely followed by her two ladies, who remained standing behind her during the conference. Even Lord Lindesay, though the rudest noble of that rude age, was surprised into something like respect by the unconcerned and majestic mien of her whom he had expected to find frantic with impotent passion, or dissolved in useless and vain sorrow, or overwhelmed with the fears likely in such a situation to assail fallen royalty.

'We fear we have detained you, my Lord of Lindesay,' said the Queen, while she courtesied with dignity in answer to his reluctant obeisance; 'but a female does not willingly receive her visitors without some minutes spent at the toilette. Men, my lord, are less dependent on such ceremonies.'

Lord Lindesay, casting his eye down on his own travel-stained and disordered dress, muttered something of a hasty journey, and the Queen paid her greeting to Sir Robert Melville with courtesy, and even, as it seemed, with kindness. There was then a dead pause, during which Lindesay looked towards the door, as if expecting with impatience the colleague of their embassy. The Queen alone was entirely unembarrassed, and, as if to break the silence, she addressed Lord Lindesay, with a glance at the large and cumbrous sword which he wore, as already mentioned, hanging from his neck.

'You have there a trusty and a weighty travelling companion, my lord. I trust you expected to meet with no enemy here, against whom such a formidable weapon could be necessary? It is, methinks, somewhat a singular ornament for a court, though I am, as I well need to be, too much of a Stewart to fear a sword.'

'It is not the first time, madam,' replied Lindesay, bringing round the weapon so as to rest its point on the ground, and leaning one hand on the huge cross-handle—'it is not the first time that this weapon has intruded itself into the presence of the house of Stewart.'

'Possibly, my lord,' replied the Queen, 'it may have done service to my ancestors. Your ancestors were men of loyalty.'

'Ay, madam,' replied he, 'service it hath done; but such as

kings love neither to acknowledge nor to reward. It was the service which the knife renders to the tree when trimming it to the quick, and depriving it of the superfluous growth of rank and unfruitful suckers, which rob it of nourishment.'

'You talk riddles, my lord,' said Mary; 'I will hope the explanation carries nothing insulting with it.'

'You shall judge, madam,' answered Lindesay. 'With this good sword was Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, girded on the memorable day when he acquired the name of Bell-the-Cat, for dragging from the presence of your great-grandfather, the third James of the race, a crew of minions, flatterers, and favourites, whom he hanged over the bridge of Lauder, as a warning to such reptiles how they approach a Scottish throne. With this same weapon, the same inflexible champion of Scottish honour and nobility slew at one blow Spens of Kilspindie, a courtier of your grandfather, James the Fourth, who had dared to speak lightly of him in the royal presence. They fought near the brook of Fala; and Bell-the-Cat, with this blade, sheared through the thigh of his opponent, and lopped the limb as easily as a shepherd's boy slices a twig from a sapling.'

'My lord,' replied the Queen, reddening, 'my nerves are too good to be alarmed even by this terrible history. May I ask how a blade so illustrious passed from the house of Douglas to that of Lindesay? Methinks it should have been preserved as a consecrated relic by a family who have held all that they could do against their king to be done in favour of their country.'

'Nay, madam,' said Melville, anxiously interfering, 'ask not that question of Lord Lindesay. And you, my lord, for shame—for decency, forbear to reply to it.'

'It is time that this lady should hear the truth,' replied Lindesay.

'And be assured,' said the Queen, 'that she will be moved to anger by none that you can tell her, my lord. There are cases in which just scorn has always the mastery over just anger.'

'Then know,' said Lindesay, 'that upon the field of Carberry Hill, when that false and infamous traitor and murderer, James, sometime Earl of Bothwell, and nicknamed Duke of Orkney, offered to do personal battle with any of the associated nobles who came to drag him to justice, I accepted his challenge, and was by the noble Earl of Morton gifted with his good sword that I might therewith fight it out. Ah! so help me Heaven, had his presumption been one grain more, or his cowardice one grain less, I should have done such work with this good steel

on his traitorous corpse that the hounds and carrion-crows should have found their morsels daintily carved to their use !'

The Queen's courage wellnigh gave way at the mention of Bothwell's name — a name connected with such a train of guilt, shame, and disaster. But the prolonged boast of Lindesay gave her time to rally herself, and to answer with an appearance of cold contempt — 'It is easy to slay an enemy who enters not the lists. But had Mary Stewart inherited her father's sword as well as his sceptre, the boldest of her rebels should not upon that day have complained that they had no one to cope withal. Your lordship will forgive me if I abridge this conference. A brief description of a bloody fight is long enough to satisfy a lady's curiosity ; and unless my Lord of Lindesay has something more important to tell us than of the deeds which old Bell-the-Cat achieved, and how he would himself have emulated them, had time and tide permitted, we will retire to our private apartment ; and you, Fleming, shall finish reading to us yonder little treatise *Des Rodomontades Espagnoles*.'

'Tarry, madam,' said Lindesay, his complexion reddening in his turn ; 'I know your quick wit too well of old to have sought an interview that you might sharpen its edge at the expense of my honour. Lord Ruthven and myself, with Sir Robert Melville as a concurrent, come to your Grace on the part of the secret council, to tender to you what much concerns the safety of your own life and the welfare of the state.'

'The secret council !' said the Queen. ' / what powers can it subsist or act, while I, from whom it holds its character, am here detained under unjust restraint ? But it matters not : what concerns the welfare of Scotland shall be acceptable to Mary Stewart, come from whatever quarter it will ; and for what concerns her own life, she has lived long enough to be weary of it, even at the age of twenty-five. Where is your colleague, my lord ; why tarries he ?'

'He comes, madam,' said Melville, and Lord Ruthven entered at the instant, holding in his hand a packet. As the Queen returned his salutation, she became deadly pale, but instantly recovered herself by dint of strong and sudden resolution, just as the noble, whose appearance seemed to excite such emotions in her bosom, entered the apartment in company with George Douglas, the youngest son of the Knight of Lochleven, who, during the absence of his father and brethren, acted as seneschal of the castle, under the direction of the elder Lady Lochleven, his father's mother.

CHAPTER XXII

I give this heavy weight from off my head,
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand ;
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With my own hand I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duteous oaths.

Richard II.

LORD RUTHVEN had the look and bearing which became a soldier and a statesman, and the martial cast of his form and features procured him the popular epithet of Greysteil, by which he was distinguished by his intimates, after the hero of a metrical romance then generally known. His dress, which was a buff coat embroidered, had a half-military character, but exhibited nothing of the sordid negligence which distinguished that of Lindesay. But the son of an ill-fated sire, and the father of a yet more unfortunate family, bore in his look that cast of inauspicious melancholy by which the physiognomists of that time pretended to distinguish those who were predestined to a violent and unhappy death.

The terror which the presence of this nobleman impressed on the Queen's mind arose from the active share he had borne in the slaughter of David Rizzio ; his father having presided at the perpetration of that abominable crime, although so weak from long and wasting illness that he could not endure the weight of his armour, having arisen from a sick-bed to commit a murder in the presence of his sovereign. On that occasion his son also had attended and taken an active part. It was little to be wondered at that the Queen, considering her condition when such a deed of horror was acted in her presence, should retain an instinctive terror for the principal actors in the murder. She returned, however, with grace the salutation of Lord Ruthven, and extended her hand to George Douglas, who kneeled and kissed it with respect — the first mark of a subject's

homage which Roland Græme had seen any of them render to the captive sovereign. She returned his greeting in silence, and there was a brief pause, during which the steward of the castle, a man of a sad brow and a severe eye, placed, under George Douglas's directions, a table and writing materials; and the page, obedient to his mistress's dumb signal, advanced a large chair to the side on which the Queen stood, the table thus forming a sort of bar which divided the Queen and her personal followers from her unwelcome visitors. The steward then withdrew, after a low reverence. When he had closed the door behind him, the Queen broke silence. 'With your favour, my lords, I will sit; my walks are not indeed extensive enough at present to fatigue me greatly, yet I find repose something more necessary than usual.'

She sat down accordingly, and, shading her cheek with her beautiful hand, looked keenly and impressively at each of the nobles in turn. Mary Fleming applied her kerchief to her eyes, and Catherine Seyton and Roland Græme exchanged a glance, which showed that both were too deeply engrossed with sentiments of interest and commiseration for their royal mistress to think of anything which regarded themselves.

'I wait the purpose of your mission, my lords,' said the Queen, after she had been seated for about a minute without a word being spoken — 'I wait your message from those you call the secret council. I trust it is a petition of pardon, and a desire that I will resume my regal throne, without using with due severity my right of punishing those who have dispossessed me of it?'

'Madam,' replied Ruthven, 'it is painful for us to speak harsh truths to a princess who has long ruled us. But we come to offer, not to implore, pardon. In a word, madam, we have to propose to you, on the part of the secret council, that you sign these deeds, which will contribute greatly to the pacification of the state, the advancement of God's Word, and the welfare of your own future life.'

'Am I expected to take these fair words on trust, my lord? or may I hear the contents of these reconciling papers ere I am asked to sign them?'

'Unquestionably, madam; it is our purpose and wish you should read what you are required to sign,' replied Ruthven.

'Required?' replied the Queen, with some emphasis; 'but the phrase suits well the matter. Read, my lord.'

The Lord Ruthven proceeded to read a formal instrument,

running in the Queen's name, and setting forth that she had been called, at an early age, to the administration of the crown and realm of Scotland, and had toiled diligently therein, until she was in body and spirit so wearied out and disgusted that she was unable any longer to endure the travail and pain of state affairs; and that, since God had blessed her with a fair and hopeful son, she was desirous to ensure to him, even while she yet lived, his succession to the crown, which was his by right of hereditary descent. 'Wherefore,' the instrument proceeded, 'we, of the motherly affection we bear to our said son, have renounced and demitted, and, by these our letters of free good-will, renounce and demit, the crown, government, and guiding of the realm of Scotland, in favour of our said son, that he may succeed to us as native prince thereof, as much as if we had been removed by disease, and not by our own proper act. And that this demission of our royal authority may have the more full and solemn effect, and none pretend ignorance, we give, grant, and commit full and free and plain power to our trusty cousins, Lord Lindesay of the Byres and William Lord Ruthven, to appear in our name before as many of the nobility, clergy, and burgesses as may be assembled at Stirling, and there, in our name and behalf, publicly, and in their presence, to renounce the crown, guidance, and government of this our kingdom of Scotland.'

The Queen here broke in with an air of extreme surprise. 'How is this, my lords?' she said. 'Are my ears turned rebels, that they deceive me with sounds so extraordinary? And yet it is no wonder that, having conversed so long with rebellion, they should now force its language upon my understanding. Say I am mistaken, my lords—say, for the honour of yourselves and the Scottish nobility, that my right trusty cousins of Lindesay and Ruthven, two barons of warlike fame and ancient line, have not sought the prison-house of their kind mistress for such a purpose as these words seem to imply. Say, for the sake of honour and loyalty, that my ears have deceived me.'

'No, madam,' said Ruthven, gravely, 'your ears do *not* deceive you; they deceived you when they were closed against the preachers of the Evangel, and the honest advice of your faithful subjects; and when they were ever open to flattery of pickthanks and traitors, foreign cubiculars and domestic minions. The land may no longer brook the rule of one who cannot rule herself; wherefore I pray you to comply with the last remain-

ing wish of your subjects and counsellors, and spare yourself and us the further agitation of matters so painful.'

'And is this *all* my loving subjects require of me, my lord?' said Mary, in a tone of bitter irony. 'Do they really stint themselves to the easy boon that I should yield up the crown, which is mine by birthright, to an infant which is scarcely more than a year old; fling down my sceptre, and take up a distaff? O no! it is too little for them to ask. That other roll of parchment contains something harder to be complied with, and which may more highly task my readiness to comply with the petitions of my lieges.'

'This parchment,' answered Ruthven, in the same tone of inflexible gravity, and unfolding the instrument as he spoke. 'is one by which your Grace constitutes your nearest in blood, and the most honourable and trustworthy of your subjects, James Earl of Murray, regent of the kingdom during the minority of the young King. He already holds the appointment from the secret council.'

The Queen gave a sort of shriek, and clapping her hands together, exclaimed, 'Comes the arrow out of his quiver?—out of my brother's bow? Alas! I looked for his return from France as my sole, at least my readiest, chance of deliverance. And yet, when I heard that he had assumed the government, I guessed he would shame to wield it in my name.'

'I must pray your answer, madam,' said Lord Ruthven, 'to the demand of the council.'

'The demand of the council!' said the Queen; 'say rather the demand of a set of robbers, impatient to divide the spoil they have seized. To such a demand, and sent by the mouth of a traitor, whose scalp, but for my womanish mercy, should long since have stood on the city gates, Mary of Scotland has no answer.'

'I trust, madam,' said Lord Ruthven, 'my being unacceptable to your presence will not add to your obduracy of resolution. It may become you to remember that the death of the minion, Rizzio, cost the house of Ruthven its head and leader. My father, more worthy than a whole province of such vile sycophants, died in exile, and broken-hearted.'

The Queen clasped her hands on her face, and, resting her arms on the table, stooped down her head and wept so bitterly that the tears were seen to find their way in streams between the white and slender fingers with which she endeavoured to conceal them.

'My lords,' said Sir Robert Melville, 'this is too much rigour. Under your lordships' favour, we came hither, not to revive old griefs, but to find the mode of avoiding new ones.'

'Sir Robert Melville,' said Ruthven, 'we best know for what purpose we were delegated hither, and wherefore you were somewhat unnecessarily sent to attend us.'

'Nay, by my hand,' said Lord Lindesay, 'I know not why we were cumbered with the good knight, unless he comes in place of the lump of sugar which pothecars put into their wholesome but bitter medicaments, to please a froward child — a needless labour, methinks, where men have the means to make them swallow the physic otherwise.'

'Nay, my lords,' said Melville, 'ye best know your own secret instructions. I conceive I shall best obey mine in striving to mediate between her Grace and you.'

'Be silent, Sir Robert Melville,' said the Queen, arising, and her face still glowing with agitation as she spoke. 'My kerchief, Fleming: I shame that traitors should have power to move me thus. Tell me,' proud lords, she added, wiping away the tears as she spoke, 'by what earthly warrant can liege subjects pretend to challenge the rights of an anointed sovereign, to throw off the allegiance they have vowed, and to take away the crown from the head on which Divine warrant hath placed it.'

'Madam,' said Ruthven, 'I will deal plainly with you. Your reign, from the dismal field of Pinkie Cleuch, when you were a babe in the cradle, till now that ye stand a grown dame before us, hath been such a tragedy of losses, disasters, civil dissensions, and foreign wars that the like is not to be found in our chronicles. The French and English have, with one consent, made Scotland the battlefield on which to fight out their own ancient quarrel. For ourselves, every man's hand hath been against his brother, nor hath a year passed over without rebellion and slaughter, exile of nobles, and passing of the commons. We may endure it no longer: therefore, as a prince to whom God hath refused the gift of wisdom, and on whose dealings and government no blessing hath ever descended, we pray you to give way to other rule and governance of the land, that a remnant may yet be saved to this distracted realm.'

'My lord,' said Mary, 'it seems to me that you fling on my unhappy and devoted head those evils which, with far more justice, I may impute to your own turbulent, wild, and untamable dispositions: the frantic violence with which you, the magnates of Scotland, enter into feuds against each other, stick-

ing at no cruelty to gratify your wrath, taking deep revenge for the slightest offences, and setting at defiance those wise laws which your ancestors made for stanching of such cruelty, rebelling against the lawful authority, and bearing yourselves as if there were no king in the land, or rather as if each were king in his own premises. And now you throw the blame on me — on me, whose life has been embittered — whose sleep has been broken — whose happiness has been wrecked by your dissensions. Have I not myself been obliged to traverse wilds and mountains, at the head of a few faithful followers, to maintain peace and to put down oppression? Have I not worn harness on my person, and carried pistols at my saddle: fain to lay aside the softness of a woman, and the dignity of a queen, that I might show an example to my followers?

'We grant, madam,' said Lindesay, 'that the affrays occasioned by your misgovernment may sometimes have startled you in the midst of a masque or galliard; or it may be that such may have interrupted the idolatry of the mass, or the Jesuitical counsels of some French ambassador. But the longest and severest journey which your Grace has taken in my memory was from Hawick to Hermitage Castle; and whether it was for the weal of the state, or for your own honour rests with your Grace's conscience.'

The Queen turned to him with inexpressible sweetness of tone and manner, and that engaging look which Heaven had assigned her, as if to show that the choicest arts to win men's affections may be given in vain. 'Lindesay,' she said, 'you spoke not to me in this stern tone, and with such scurril taunt, yon fair summer evening, when you and I shot at the butts against the Earl of Mar and Mary Livingstone, and won of them the evening's collation, in the privy garden of St. Andrews. The Master of Lindesay was then my friend, and vowed to be my soldier. How I have offended the Lord of Lindesay I know not, unless honours have changed manners.'

Hard-hearted as he was, Lindesay seemed struck with this unexpected appeal, but almost instantly replied, 'Madam, it is well known that your Grace could in those days make fools of whomever approached you. I pretend not to have been wiser than others. But gayer men and better courtiers soon jostled aside my rude homage, and I think that your Grace cannot but remember times when my awkward attempts to take the manners that pleased you were the sport of the court popinjays, the Marys and the Frenchwomen.'

'My lord, I grieve if I have offended you through idle gaiety,' said the Queen, 'and can but say it was most unwittingly done. You are fully revenged; for through gaiety,' she said with a sigh, 'will I never offend any one more.'

'Our time is wasting, madam,' said Lord Ruthven; 'I must pray your decision on this weighty matter which I have submitted to you.'

'What, my lord!' said the Queen, 'upon the instant, and without a moment's time to deliberate? Can the council, as they term themselves, expect this of me.'

'Madam,' replied Ruthven, 'the council hold the opinion that, since the fatal term which passed betwixt the night of King Henry's murder and the day of Carberry Hill, your Grace should have held you prepared for the measure now proposed, as the easiest escape from your numerous dangers and difficulties.'

'Great God!' exclaimed the Queen; 'and is it as a boon that you propose to me, what every Christian king ought to regard as a loss of honour equal to the loss of life! You take from me my crown, my power, my subjects, my wealth, my state. What, in the name of every saint, can you offer, or do you offer, in requital of my compliance?'

'We give you pardon,' answered Ruthven, sternly; 'we give you space and means to spend your remaining life in penitence and seclusion; we give you time to make your peace with Heaven, and to receive the pure Gospel, which you have ever rejected and persecuted.'

The Queen turned pale at the menace which this speech, as well as the rough and inflexible tones of the speaker, seemed distinctly to infer. 'And if I do not comply with your request so fiercely urged, my lord, what then follows?'

She said this in a voice in which female and natural fear was contending with the feelings of insulted dignity. There was a pause, as if no one cared to return to the question a distinct answer. At length Ruthven spoke. 'There is little need to tell to your Grace, who are well read both in the laws and in the chronicles of the realm, that murder and adultery are crimes for which ere now queens themselves have suffered death.'

'And where, my lord, or how, found you an accusation so horrible against her who stands before you?' said Queen Mary. 'The foul and odious calumnies which have poisoned the general mind of Scotland, and have placed me a helpless prisoner in your hands, are surely no proof of guilt?'

'We need look for no further proof,' replied the stern Lord Ruthven, 'than the shameless marriage betwixt the widow of the murdered and the leader of the band of murderers! They that joined hands in the fated month of May had already united hearts and counsel in the deed which preceded that marriage but a few brief weeks.'

'My lord — my lord!' said the Queen, eagerly, 'remember well there were more consents than mine to that fatal union — that most unhappy act of a most unhappy life. The evil steps adopted by sovereigns are often the suggestion of bad counsellors; but these counsellors are worse than fiends who tempt and betray, if they themselves are the first to call their unfortunate princes to answer for the consequences of their own advice. Heard ye never of a bond by the nobles, my lords, recommending that ill-fated union to the ill-fated Mary? Methinks, were it carefully examined, we should see that the names of Morton, and of Lindesay, and of Ruthven may be found in that bond, which pressed me to marry that unhappy man. Ah! stout and loyal Lord Herries, who never knew guile or dishonour, you bent your noble knee to me in vain, to warn me of my danger, and wert yet the first to draw thy good sword in my cause when I suffered for neglecting thy counsel! Faithful knight and true noble, what a difference betwixt thee and those counsellors of evil who now threaten my life for having fallen into the snares they spread for me!'

'Madam,' said Ruthven, 'we know that you are an orator; and perhaps for that reason the council has sent hither men whose converse hath been more with the wars than with the language of the schools or the cabals of state. We but desire to know if, on assurance of life and honour, ye will demit the rule of this kingdom of Scotland?'

'And what warrant have I,' said the Queen, 'that ye will keep treaty with me, if I should barter my kingly estate for seclusion and leave to weep in secret?'

'Our honour and our word, madam,' answered Ruthven.

'They are too slight and unsolid pledges, my lord,' said the Queen; 'add at least a handful of thistle-down to give them weight in the balance.'

'Away, Ruthven,' said Lindesay; 'she was ever deaf to counsel, save of slaves and sycophants: let her remain by her refusal, and abide by it!'

'Stay, my lord,' said Sir I. . . . Melville, 'or rather permit me to have but a few minutes' private audience with her Grace.'

If my presence with you could avail aught, it must be as a mediator; do not, I conjure you, leave the castle, or break off the conference, until I bring you word how her Grace shall finally stand disposed.'

'We will remain in the hall,' said Lindesay, 'for half an hour's space; but in despising our words and our pledge of honour, she has touched the honour of my name: let her look herself to the course she has to pursue. If the half-hour should pass away without her determining to comply with the demands of the nation, her career will be brief enough.'

With little ceremony the two nobles left the apartment, traversed the vestibule, and descended the winding stairs, the clash of Lindesay's huge sword being heard as it rang against each step in his descent. George Douglas followed them, after exchanging with Melville a gesture of surprise and sympathy.

As soon as they were gone, the Queen, giving way to grief, fear, and agitation, threw herself into the seat, wrung her hands, and seemed to abandon herself to despair. Her female attendants, weeping themselves, endeavoured to pray her to be composed, and Sir Robert Melville, kneeling at her feet, made the same entreaty. After giving way to a passionate burst of sorrow, she at length said to Melville, 'Kneel not to me, Melville — mock me not with the homage of the person, when the heart is far away. Why stay you behind with the deposed — the condemned? — her who has but few hours perchance to live? You have been favoured as well as the rest; why do you continue the empty show of gratitude and thankfulness any longer than they?'

'Madam,' said Sir Robert Melville, 'so help me Heaven at my need, my heart is as true to you as when you were in your highest place.'

'True to me! — true to me!' repeated the Queen, with some scorn; 'tush, Melville, what signifies the truth which walks hand in hand with my enemies' falsehood? Thy hand and thy sword have never been so well acquainted that I can trust thee in aught where manhood is required. Oh, Seyton, for thy bold father, who is both wise, true, and valiant!'

Roland Græme could withstand no longer his earnest desire to offer his services to a princess so distressed and so beautiful. 'If one sword,' he said, 'madam, can do anything to back the wisdom of this grave counsellor, or to defend your rightful cause, here is my weapon, and here is my hand ready to draw and use it.' And raising his sword with one hand, he laid the other upon the hilt.

As he thus held up the weapon, Catherine Seyton exclaimed, 'Methinks I see a token from my father, madam'; and immediately crossing the apartment, she took Roland Græme by the skirt of the cloak, and asked him earnestly whence he had that sword.

The page answered with surprise, 'Methinks this is no presence in which to jest. Surely, damsel, you yourself best know whence and how I obtained the weapon.'

'Is this a time for folly?' said Catherine Seyton. 'Unsheathe the sword instantly!'

'If the Queen commands me,' said the youth, looking towards his royal mistress.

'For shame, maiden!' said the Queen; 'wouldst thou instigate the poor boy to enter into useless strife with the two most approved soldiers in Scotland?'

'In your Grace's cause,' replied the page, 'I will venture my life upon them!' And as he spoke he drew his weapon partly from the sheath, and a piece of parchment, rolled around the blade, fell out and dropped on the floor.

Catherine Seyton caught it up with eager haste. 'It is my father's handwriting,' she said, 'and doubtless conveys his best duteous advice to your Majesty; I knew that it was prepared to be sent in this weapon, but I expected another messenger.'

'By my faith, fair one,' thought Roland, 'and if you knew not that I had such a secret missive about me, I was yet more ignorant.'

The Queen cast her eye upon the scroll, and remained a few minutes wrapped in deep thought. 'Sir Robert Melville,' she at length said, 'this scroll advises me to submit myself to necessity, and to subscribe the deeds these hard men have brought with them, as one who gives way to the natural fear inspired by the threats of rebels and murderers. You, Sir Robert, are a wise man, and Seyton is both sagacious and brave. Neither, I think, would mislead me in this matter.'

'Madam,' said Melville, 'if I have not the strength of body of the Lords Herries or Seyton, I will yield to neither in zeal for your Majesty's service. I cannot fight for you like these lords, but neither of them is more willing to die for your service.'

'I believe it, my old and faithful counsellor,' said the Queen, 'and believe me, Melville, I did thee but a moment's injustice. Read what my Lord Seyton hath written to us, and give us thy best counsel.'

He glanced over the parchment, and instantly replied, 'Oh! my dear and royal mistress, only treason itself could give you other advice than Lord Seyton has here expressed. He, Herries, Huntly, the English ambassador Throgmorton, and others, your friends, are all alike of opinion that whatever deeds or instruments you execute within these walls must lose all force and effect, as extorted from your Grace by duress, by sufferance of present evil, and fear of men, and harm to ensue on your refusal. Yield, therefore, to the tide, and be assured that, in subscribing what parchments they present to you, you bind yourself to nothing, since your act of signature wants that which alone can make it valid, the free will of the grantor.'

'Ay, so says my Lord Seyton,' replied Mary; 'yet methinks, for the daughter of so long a line of sovereigns to resign her birthright, because rebels press upon her with threats, argues little of royalty, and will read ill for the fame of Mary in future chronicles. Tush! Sir Robert Melville, the traitors may use black threats and bold words, but they will not dare to put their hands forth on our person?'

'Alas! madam, they have already dared so far, and incurred such peril by the lengths which they have gone, that they are but one step from the worst and uttermost.'

'Surely,' said the Queen, her fears again predominating, 'Scottish nobles would not lend themselves to assassinate a helpless woman?'

'Bethink you, madam,' he replied, 'what horrid spectacles have been seen in our day; and what act is so dark that some Scottish hand has not been found to dare it? Lord Lindesay, besides his natural sullenness and hardness of temper, is the near kinsman of Henry Darnley, and Ruthven has his own deep and dangerous plans. The council, besides, speak of proofs by writ and word, of a casket with letters — of I know not what.'

'Ah! good Melville,' answered the Queen, 'were I as sure of the even-handed integrity of my judges as of my own innocence — and yet —'

'Oh! pause, madam,' said Melville; 'even innocence must sometimes for a season stoop to injurious blame. Besides, you are here —'

He looked round and paused.

'Speak out, Melville,' said the Queen, 'never one approached my person who wished to work me evil; and even this poor page, whom I have to-day seen for the first time in my life, I can trust safely with your communication.'

'Nay, madam, answered Melville, 'in such emergence, and he being the bearer of Lord Seyton's message, I will venture to say before him and these fair ladies, whose truth and fidelity I dispute not — I say, I will venture to say, that there are other modes besides that of open trial by which deposed sovereigns often die; and, that, as Machiavel saith, there is but one step betwixt a king's prison and his grave.'

'Oh! were it but swift and easy for the body,' said the unfortunate princess, 'were it but a safe and happy change for the soul, the woman lives not that would take the step so soon as I! But, alas! Melville, when we think of death, a thousand sins, which we have trod as worms beneath our feet, rise up against us as flaming serpents. Most injuriously do they accuse me of aiding Darnley's death; yet, blessed Lady! I afforded too open occasion for the suspicion: I espoused Bothwell.'

'Think not of that now, madam,' said Melville, 'think rather of the immediate mode of saving yourself and son. Comply with the present unreasonable demands, and trust that better times will shortly arrive.'

'Madam,' said Roland Græme, 'if it pleases you that I should do so, I will presently swim through the lake, if they refuse me other conveyance to the shore; I will go to the courts successively of England, France, and Spain, and will show you have subscribed these vile instruments from no stronger impulse than the fear of death, and I will do battle against them that say otherwise.'

The Queen turned her round, and with one of those sweet smiles which, during the era of life's romance, overpay every risk, held her hand towards Roland, but without speaking a word. He kneeled reverently and kissed it, and Melville again resumed his plea.

'Madam,' he said, 'time presses, and you must not let those boats, which I see they are even now preparing, put forth on the lake. Here are enough of witnesses — your ladies — this bold youth — myself, when it can serve your cause effectually, for I would not hastily stand committed in this matter; but even without me here is evidence enough to show that you have yielded to the demands of the council through force and fear, but from no sincere and unconstrained assent. Their boats are already manned for their return; oh! permit your old servant to recall them!'

'Melville,' said the Queen, 'thou art an ancient courtier, when didst thou ever know a sovereign prince recall to his

presence subjects who had parted from him on such terms as those on which these envoys of the council left us, and who yet were recalled without submission or apology? Let it cost me both life and crown, I will not again command them to my presence.'

'Alas! madam, that empty form should make a barrier! If I rightly understand, you are not unwilling to listen to real and advantageous counsel; but your scruple is saved, I hear them returning to ask your final resolution. Oh! take the advice of the noble Seyton, and you may once more command those who now usurp a triumph over you. But hush! I hear them in the vestibule.'

As he concluded speaking, George Douglas opened the door of the apartment, and marshalled in the two noble envoys.

'We come, madam,' said the Lord Ruthven, 'to request your answer to the proposal of the counsel.'

'Your final answer,' said Lord Lindesay; 'for with a refusal you must couple the certainty that you have precipitated your fate, and renounced the last opportunity of making peace with God, and ensuring your longer abode in the world.'

'My lords,' said Mary, with inexpressible grace and dignity, 'the evils we cannot resist we must submit to: I will subscribe these parchments with such liberty of choice as my condition permits me. Were I on yonder shore, with a fleet jennet and ten good and loyal knights around me, I would subscribe my sentence of eternal condemnation as soon as the resignation of my throne. But here, in the Castle of Lochleven, with deep water around me, and you, my lords, beside me, I have no freedom of choice. Give me the pen, Melville, and bear witness to what I do, and why I do it.'

'It is our hope your Grace will not suppose yourself compelled, by any apprehensions from us,' said the Lord Ruthven, 'to execute what must be your own voluntary deed.'

The Queen had already stooped towards the table, and placed the parchment before her, with the pen between her fingers, ready for the important act of signature. But when Lord Ruthven had done speaking, she looked up, stopped short, and threw down the pen. 'If,' she said, 'I am expected to declare I give away my crown of free will, or otherwise than because I am compelled to renounce it by the threat of worse evils to myself and my subjects, I will not put my name to such an untruth — not to gain full possession of England, France, and Scotland! all once my own, in possession, or by right.'

'Beware, madam,' said Lindesay, and snatching hold of the Queen's arm with his own gauntleted hand, he pressed it, in the rudeness of his passion, more closely, perhaps, than he was himself aware of — 'beware how you contend with those who are the stronger, and have the mastery of your fate!'

He held his grasp on her arm, bending his eyes on her with a stern and intimidating look, till both Ruthven and Melville cried 'Shame!' and Douglas, who had hitherto remained in a state of apparent apathy, had made a stride from the door, as if to interfere. The rude baron then quitted his hold, disguising the confusion which he really felt at having indulged his passion to such extent under a sullen and contemptuous smile.

The Queen immediately began, with an expression of pain, to bare the arm which he had grasped, by drawing up the sleeve of her gown, and it appeared that his gripe had left the purple marks of his iron fingers upon her flesh. 'My lord,' she said, 'as a knight and gentleman, you might have spared my frail arm so severe a proof that you have the greater strength on your side, and are resolved to use it. But I thank you for it — it is the most decisive token of the terms on which this day's business is to rest. I draw you to witness, both lords and ladies,' she said, showing the marks of the grasp on her arm, 'that I subscribe these instruments in obedience to the sign-manual of my Lord of Lindesay, which you may see imprinted on mine arm.'¹

Lindesay would have spoken, but was restrained by his colleague Ruthven, who said to him, 'Peace, my lord. Let the Lady Mary of Scotland ascribe her signature to what she will, it is our business to procure it, and carry it to the council. Should there be debate hereafter on the manner in which it was adhibited, there will be time enough for it.'

Lindesay was silent accordingly, only muttering within his beard, 'I meant not to hurt her; but I think women's flesh be as tender as new-fallen snow.'

The Queen meanwhile subscribed the rolls of parchment with a hasty indifference, as if they had been matters of slight consequence, or of mere formality. When she had performed this painful task, she arose, and, having courtesied to the lords, was about to withdraw to her chamber. Ruthven and Sir Robert Melville made, the first a formal reverence, the second an obeisance, in which his desire to acknowledge his sympathy was obviously checked by the fear of appearing in the eyes of his colleagues too partial to his former mistress. But Lindesay

¹ See The Resignation of Queen Mary. Note 16.

stood motionless, even when they were preparing to withdraw. At length, as if moved by a sudden impulse, he walked round the table which had hitherto been betwixt them and the Queen, kneeled on one knee, took her hand, kissed it, let it fall, and arose. 'Lady,' he said, 'thou art a noble creature, even though thou hast abused God's choicest gifts. I pay that devotion to thy manliness of spirit which I would not have paid to the power thou hast long undeservedly wielded : I kneel to Mary Stuart, not to the Queen.'

'The Queen and Mary Stewart pity thee alike, Lindesay,' said Mary — 'alike they pity, and they forgive thee. An honoured soldier hadst thou been by a king's side ; leagued with rebels, what art thou but a good blade in the hands of a ruffian ? Farewell, my Lord Ruthven, the smoother but the deeper traitor. Farewell, Melville. Mayest thou find masters that can understand state policy better, and have the means to reward it more richly, than Mary Stewart ! Farewell, George of Douglas ; make your respected grand-dame comprehend that we would be alone for the remainder of the day. God wot, we have need to collect our thoughts.'

All bowed and withdrew ; but scarce had they entered the vestibule ere Ruthven and Lindesay were at variance. 'Chide not with me, Ruthven,' Lindesay was heard to say in answer to something more indistinctly urged by his colleague — 'chide not with me, for I will not brook it ! You put the hangman's office on me in this matter, and even the very hangman hath leave to ask some pardon of those on whom he does his office. I would I had as deep cause to be this lady's friend as I have to be her enemy : thou shouldst see if I spared limb and life in her quarrel.'

'Thou art a sweet minion,' said Ruthven, 'to fight a lady's quarrel, and all for a bent brow and a tear in the eye ! Such toys have been out of thy thoughts this many a year.'

'Do me right, Ruthven,' said Lindesay. 'You are like a polished corslet of steel : it shines more gaudily, but it is not a whit softer — nay, it is five times harder — than a Glasgow breast-plate of hammered iron. Enough. We know each other.'

They descended the stairs, were heard to summon their boats, and the Queen signed to Roland Graeme to retire to the vestibule, and leave her with her female attendants.

CHAPTER XXIII

Give me a morsel on the greensward rather,
Coarse as you will the cooking. Let the fresh spring
Bubble beside my napkin, and the free birds,
Twittering and chirping, hop from bough to bough,
To claim the crumbs I leave for perquisites ;
Your prison-feasts I like not.

The Woodsman, a Drama.

A RECESS in the vestibule was enlightened by a small window, at which Roland Græme stationed himself to mark the departure of the lords. He could see their followers mustering on horseback under their respective banners, the western sun glancing on their corslets and steel caps as they moved to and fro, mounted or dismounted, at intervals. On the narrow space betwixt the castle and the water, the Lords Ruthven and Lindesay were already moving slowly to their boats, accompanied by the Lady of Lochleven, her grandson, and their principal attendants. They took a ceremonious leave of each other, as Roland could discern by their gestures, and the boats put off from their landing-place ; the boatmen stretched to their oars, and they speedily diminished upon the eye of the idle gazer, who had no better employment than to watch their motions. Such seemed also the occupation of the Lady Lochleven and George Douglas, who, returning from the landing-place, looked frequently back to the boats, and at length stopped, as if to observe their progress, under the window at which Roland Græme was stationed. As they gazed on the lake, he could hear the lady distinctly say, 'And she has bent her mind to save her life at the expense of her kingdom ?'

'Her life, madam !' replied her son ; 'I know not who would dare to attempt it in the castle of my father. Had I dreamt that it was with such purpose that Lindesay insisted on bringing his followers hither, neither he nor they should have passed the iron gate of Lochleven Castle.'

'I speak not of private slaughter, my son, but of open trial,

condemnation, and execution ; for with such she has been threatened, and to such threats she has given way. Had she not more of the false Guisian blood than of the royal race of Scotland in her veins, she had bidden them defiance to their teeth. But it is all of the same complexion, and meanness is the natural companion of profligacy. I am discharged, forsooth, from intruding on her gracious presence this evening. Go thou, my son, and render the usual service of the meal to this un-queened queen.'

'So please you, lady mother,' said Douglas, 'I care not greatly to approach her presence.'

'Thou art right, my son ; and therefore I trust thy prudence, even because I have noted thy caution. She is like an isle on the ocean, surrounded with shelves and quicksands : its verdure fair and inviting to the eye, but the wreck of many a goodly vessel which hath approached it too rashly. But for thee, my son, I fear nought ; and we may not, with our honour, suffer her to eat without the attendance of one of us. She may die by the judgment of Heaven, or the fiend may have power over her in her despair ; and then we would be touched in honour to show that, in our house, and at our table, she had all fair play and fitting usage.'

Here Roland was interrupted by a smart tap on the shoulders, reminding him sharply of Adam Woodcock's adventure of the preceding evening. He turned round, almost expecting to see the page of St. Michael's hostelrie. He saw, indeed, Catherine Seyton ; but she was in female attire, differing, no doubt, a great deal in shape and materials from that which she had worn when they first met, and becoming her birth as the daughter of a great baron, and her rank as the attendant on a princess. 'So, fair page,' said she, 'eaves-dropping is one of your page-like qualities, I presume ?'

'Fair sister,' answered Roland, in the same tone, 'if some friends of mine be as well acquainted with the rest of our mystery as they are with the arts of swearing, swaggering, and switching, they need ask no page in Christendom for further insight into his vocation.'

'Unless that pretty speech infer that you have yourself had the discipline of the switch since we last met, the probability whereof I nothing doubt, I profess, fair page, I am at a loss to conjecture your meaning. But there is no time to debate it now — they come with the evening meal. Be pleased, sir page, to do your duty.'

Four servants entered bearing dishes, preceded by the same stern old steward whom Roland had already seen, and followed by George Douglas, already mentioned as the grandson of the Lady of Lochleven, and who, acting as seneschal, represented upon this occasion his father, the lord of the castle. He entered with his arms folded on his bosom, and his looks bent on the ground. With the assistance of Roland Græme, a table was suitably covered in the next or middle apartment, on which the domestics placed their burdens with great reverence, the steward and Douglas bending low when they had seen the table properly adorned, as if their royal prisoner had sat at the board in question. The door opened, and Douglas, raising his eyes hastily, cast them again on the earth, when he perceived it was only the Lady Mary Fleming who entered.

'Her Grace,' she said, 'will not eat to-night.'

'Let us hope she may be otherwise persuaded,' said Douglas; 'meanwhile, madam, please to see our duty performed.'

A servant presented bread and salt on a silver plate, and the old steward carved for Douglas a small morsel in succession from each of the dishes presented, which he tasted, as was then the custom at the tables of princes, to which death was often suspected to find its way in the disguise of food.

'The Queen will not then come forth to-night?' said Douglas.

'She has so determined,' replied the lady.

'Our further attendance then is unnecessary: we leave you to your supper, fair ladies, and wish you good-even.'

He retired slowly as he came, and with the same air of deep dejection, and was followed by the attendants belonging to the castle. The two ladies sate down to their meal, and Roland Græme, with ready alacrity, prepared to wait upon them. Catherine Seyton whispered to her companion, who replied with the question, spoken in a low tone, but looking at the page — 'Is he of gentle blood and well nurtured?'

The answer which she received seemed satisfactory, for she said to Roland, 'Sit down, young gentleman, and eat with your sisters in captivity.'

'Permit me rather to perform my duty in attending them,' said Roland, anxious to show he was possessed of the high tone of deference prescribed by the rules of chivalry towards the fair sex, and especially to dames and maidens of quality.

'You will find, sir page,' said Catherine, 'you will have little

time allowed you for your meal ; waste it not in ceremony, or you may rue your politeness ere to-morrow morning.'

'Your speech is too free, maiden,' said the elder lady ; 'the modesty of the youth may teach you more fitting fashions towards one whom to-day you have seen for the first time.'

Catherine Seyton cast down her eyes, but not till she had given a single glance of inexpressible archness towards Roland, whom her more grave companion now addressed in a tone of protection.

'Regard her not, young gentleman ; she knows little of the world, save the forms of a country nunnery ; take thy place at the board-end, and refresh thyself after thy journey.'

Roland Græme obeyed willingly, as it was the first food he had that day tasted ; for Lindesay and his followers seemed regardless of human wants. Yet, notwithstanding the sharpness of his appetite, a natural gallantry of disposition, the desire of showing himself a well-nurtured gentleman in all courtesies towards the fair sex, and, for aught I know, the pleasure of assisting Catherine Seyton, kept his attention awake, during the meal, to all those nameless acts of duty and service which gallants of that age were accustomed to render. He carved with neatness and decorum, and selected duly whatever was most delicate to place before the ladies. Ere they could form a wish, he sprung from the table ready to comply with it — poured wine — tempered it with water — removed and exchanged trenchers, and performed the whole honours of the table, with an air at once of cheerful diligence, profound respect, and graceful promptitude.

When he observed that they had finished eating, he hastened to offer to the elder lady the silver ewer, basin, and napkin, with the ceremony and gravity which he would have used towards Mary herself. He next, with the same decorum, having supplied the basin with fair water, presented it to Catherine Seyton. Apparently she was determined to disturb his self-possession if possible ; for, while in the act of bathing her hands, she contrived, as it were by accident, to flirt some drops of water upon the face of the assiduous assistant. But if such was her mischievous purpose she was completely disappointed ; for Roland Græme, internally piquing himself on his self-command, neither laughed nor was discomposed ; and all that the maiden gained by her frolic was a severe rebuke from her companion, taxing her with mal-address and indecorum. Catherine replied not, but sat pouting, something in the humour

of a spoilt child, who watches the opportunity of wreaking upon some one or other its resentment for a deserved reprimand.

The Lady Mary Fleming, in the meanwhile, was naturally well pleased with the exact and reverent observance of the page, and said to Catherine, after a favourable glance at Roland Grème, 'You might well say, Catherine, our companion in captivity was well born and gently nurtured. I would not make him vain by my praise, but his services enable us to dispense with those which George Douglas condescends not to afford us, save when the Queen is herself in presence.'

'Umph! I think hardly,' answered Catherine. 'George Douglas is one of the most handsome gallants in Scotland, and 't is pleasure to see him even still, when the gloom of Lochleven Castle has shed the same melancholy over him that it has done over everything else. When he was at Holyrood, who would have said the young sprightly George Douglas would have been contented to play the locksmith here in Lochleven, with no gayer amusement than that of turning the key on two or three helpless women? A strange office for a knight of the bleeding heart; why does he not leave it to his father or his brothers?'

'Perhaps, like us, he has no choice,' answered the Lady Fleming. 'But, Catherine, thou hast used thy brief space at court well, to remember what George Douglas was then.'

'I used mine eyes, which I suppose was what I was designed to do, and they were worth using there. When I was at the nunnery, they were very useless appurtenances; and now I am at Lochleven, they are good for nothing, save to look over that eternal work of embroidery.'

'You speak thus, when you have been but a few brief hours amongst us: was this the maiden who would live and die in a dungeon, might she but have permission to wait on her gracious queen?'

'Nay, if you chide in earnest, my jest is ended,' said Catherine Seyton. 'I would not yield in attachment to my poor god-mother to the gravest dame that ever had wise saws upon her tongue, and a double-starched ruff around her throat — you know I would not, Dame Mary Fleming, and it is putting shame on me to say otherwise.'

'She will challenge the other court lady,' thought Roland Grème — 'she will to a certainty fling down her glove, and if Dame Mary Fleming hath but the soul to lift it, we may have a combat in the lists!' But the answer of Lady Mary Fleming was such as turns away wrath.

'Thou art a good child,' she said, 'my Catherine, and a faithful; but Heaven pity him who shall have one like a creature so beautiful to delight him, and a thing so mischievous to torment him: thou art fit to drive twenty husbands stark mad.'

'Nay,' said Catherine, resuming the full career of her careless good-humour, 'he must be half-witted beforehand that gives me such an opportunity. But I am glad you are not angry with me in sincerity,' casting herself as she spoke into the arms of her friend, and continuing, with a tone of apologetic fondness, while she kissed her on either side of the face — 'You know, my dear Fleming, that I have to contend both with my father's lofty pride and with my mother's high spirit. God bless them! they have left me these good qualities, having small portion to give besides, as times go; and so I am wilful and saucy; but let me remain only a week in this castle, and oh, my dear Fleming, my spirit will be as chastised and as humble as thine own.'

Dame Mary Fleming's sense of dignity, and love of form, could not resist this affectionate appeal. She kissed Catherine Seyton in her turn affectionately; while, answering the last part of her speech, she said, 'Now, Our Lady forbid, dear Catherine, that you should lose aught that is becoming of what becomes so well your light heart and lively humour. Keep but your sharp wit on this side of madness, and it cannot but be a blessing to us. But let me go, mad wench — I hear her Grace touch her silver call.' And, extricating herself from Catherine's grasp, she went towards the door of Queen Mary's apartment, from which was heard the low tone of a silver whistle, which, now only used by the boatswains in the navy, was then, for want of bells, the ordinary mode by which ladies, even of the very highest rank, summoned their domestics. When she had made two or three steps towards the door, however, she turned back, and advancing to the young couple whom she left together, she said, in a very serious though a low tone, 'I trust it is impossible that we can, any of us, or in any circumstances, forget that, few as we are, we form the household of the Queen of Scotland; and that, in her calamity, all boyish mirth and childish jesting can only serve to give a great triumph to her enemies, who have already found their account in objecting to her the lightness of every idle folly that the young and the gay practised in her court.' So saying, she left the apartment.

Catherine Seyton seemed much struck with this remonstrance. She suffered herself to drop into the seat which she

ad quitted when she went to embrace Dame Mary Fleming, and for some time rested her brow upon her hands ; while Roland Græme looked at her earnestly, with a mixture of emotions which perhaps he himself could neither have analysed nor explained. As she raised her face slowly from the posture to which a momentary feeling of self-rebuke had depressed it, her eyes encountered those of Roland, and became gradually animated with their usual spirit of malicious drollery, which not unnaturally excited a similar expression in those of the equally volatile page. They sat for the space of two minutes, each looking at the other with great seriousness on their features, and much mirth in their eyes, until at length Catherine was the first to break silence.

'May I pray you, fair sir,' she began very demurely, 'to tell me what you see in my face to arouse looks so extremely sagacious and knowing as those with which it is your worship's pleasure to honour me? It would seem as there were some wonderful confidence and intimacy betwixt us, fair sir, if one is to judge from your extremely cunning looks ; and so help me, Our Lady, as I never saw you but twice in my life before.'

'And where were those happy occasions,' said Roland, 'if I may be bold enough to ask the question?'

'At the nunnery of St. Catherine's,' said the damsel, 'in the first instance ; and, in the second, during five minutes of a certain raid or foray which it was your pleasure to make into the lodging of my lord and father, Lord Seyton, from which, to my surprise, as probably to your own, you returned with a token of friendship and favour instead of broken bones, which were the more probable reward of your intrusion, considering the prompt ire of the house of Seyton. I am deeply mortified,' she added, ironically, 'that your recollection should require refreshment on a subject so important ; and that my memory should be stronger than yours on such an occasion is truly humiliating.'

'Your own memory is not so exactly correct, fair mistress,' answered the page, 'seeing you have forgotten meeting the third, in the hostelry of St. Michael's, when it pleased you to lay your switch across the face of my comrade, in order, I warrant, to show that, in the house of Seyton, neither the prompt ire of its descendants, nor the use of the doublet and hose, are subject to Salique law, or confined to the use of the males.'

'Fair sir,' answered Catherine, looking at him with great

steadiness and some surprise, 'u'less your fair wits have forsaken you, I am at a loss what to conjecture of your meaning.'

'By my troth, fair mistress,' answered Roland, 'and were I as wise a warlock as Michael Scott, I could scarce riddle the dream you read me. Did I not see you last night in the hostelry of St. Michael's? Did you not bring me this sword, with command not to draw it save at the command of my native and rightful sovereign? And have I not done as you required me? Or is the sword a piece of lath, my word a bulrush, my memory a dream, and my eyes good for nought — capials which corbies might pick out of my head?'

'And if your eyes serve you not more truly on other occasions than in your vision of St. Michael,' said Catherine, 'I know not, the pain apart, that the corbies would do you any great injury in the deprivation. But hark, the bell; hush, for God's sake, we are interrupted —'

The damsel was right; for no sooner had the dull toll of the castle bell begun to resound through the vaulted apartment than the door of the vestibule flew open, and the steward, with his severe countenance, his gold chain, and his white rod, entered the apartment, followed by the same train of domestics who had placed the dinner on the table, and who now, with the same ceremonious formality, began to remove it.

The steward remained motionless as some old picture, while the domestics did their office; and when it was accomplished, everything removed from the table, and the board itself taken from its tressels and disposed against the wall, he said aloud, without addressing any one in particular, and somewhat in the tone of a herald reading a proclamation, 'My noble lady, Dame Margaret Erskine, by marriage Douglas, lets the Lady Mary of Scotland and her attendants to wit, that a servant of the true Evangel, her reverend chaplain, will to-night, as usual, expound, lecture, and catechise, according to the forms of the congregation of Gospellers.'

'Hark you, my friend, Mr. Dryfesdale,' said Catherine, 'I understand this announcement is a nightly form of yours. Now, I pray you to remark, that the Lady Fleming and I — for I trust your insolent invitation concerns us only — have chosen St. Peter's pathway to Heaven; so I see no one whom your golly exhortation, catechise, or lecture can benefit, excepting this poor page, who, being in Satan's hand as well as yourself, had better worship with you than remain to cumber our better advised devotions.'

The page was wellnigh giving a round denial to the assertions which this speech implied, when, remembering what had passed betwixt him and the Regent, and seeing Catherine's finger raised in a monitory fashion, he felt himself, as on former occasions at the Castle of Avenel, obliged to submit to the task of dissimulation, and followed Dryfesdale down to the castle chapel, where he assisted in the devotions of the evening.

The chaplain was named Elias Henderson. He was a man in the prime of life, and possessed of good natural parts, carefully improved by the best education which those times afforded. To these qualities were added a faculty of close and terse reasoning, and, at intervals, a flow of happy illustration and natural eloquence. The religious faith of Roland Græme, as we have already had opportunity to observe, rested on no secure basis, but was entertained rather in obedience to his grandmother's behests, and his secret desire to contradict the chaplain of Avenel Castle, than from any fixed or steady reliance which he placed on the Romish creed. His ideas had been of late considerably enlarged by the scenes he had passed through; and feeling that there was shame in not understanding something of those political disputes betwixt the professors of the ancient and of the Reformed faith, he listened, with more attention than it had hitherto been in his nature to yield on such occasions, to an animated discussion of some of the principal points of difference betwixt the churches.

So passed away the first day in the Castle of Lochleven; and those which followed it were, for some time, of a very monotonous and uniform tenor.



LOCHLEVEN CASTLE.
From a recent photograph.

CHAPTER XXIV

'Tis a weary life this
Vaults overhead, and grates and bars around me,
And my sad hours spent with as sad companions,
Whose thoughts are brooding o'er their own mischances,
Far, far too deeply to take part in mine.

The Woodsman.

THE course of life to which Mary and her little retinue were doomed was in the last degree secluded and lonely, varied only as the weather permitted or rendered impossible the Queen's usual walk in the garden or on the battlements. The greater part of the morning she wrought with her ladies at those pieces of needlework many of which still remain, proofs of her indefatigable application. At such hours the page was permitted the freedom of the castle and islet; nay, he was sometimes invited to attend George Douglas when he went a-sporting upon the lake or on its margin — opportunities of diversion which were only clouded by the remarkable melancholy which always seemed to brood on that gentleman's brow, and to mark his whole demeanour — a sadness so profound that Roland never observed him to smile, or to speak any word unconnected with the immediate object of their exercise.

The most pleasant part of Roland's day was the occasional space which he was permitted to pass in personal attendance on the Queen and her ladies, together with the regular dinner-time, which he always spent with Dame Mary Fleming and Catherine Seyton. At these periods, he had frequent occasion to admire the lively spirit and inventive imagination of the latter damsel, who was unwearied in her contrivances to amuse her mistress, and to banish, for a time at least, the melancholy which preyed on her bosom. She danced, she sung, she recited tales of ancient and modern times, with that heartfelt exertion of talent of which the pleasure lies not in the vanity of displaying it to others, but in the enthusiastic consciousness that we

possess it ourselves. And yet these high accomplishments were mixed with an air of rusticity and hare-brained vivacity which seemed rather to belong to some village maid, the coquette of the ring around the Maypole, than to the high-bred descendant of an ancient baron. A touch of audacity, altogether short of effrontery, and far less approaching to vulgarity, gave, as it were, a wildness to all that she did ; and Mary, while defending her from some of the occasional censures of her grave companion, compared her to a trained singing-bird escaped from a cage, which practises in all the luxuriance of freedom, and in full possession of the greenwood bough, the airs which it had learned during its earlier captivity.

The moments which the page was permitted to pass in the presence of this fascinating creature danced so rapidly away that, brief as they were, they compensated the weary dullness of all the rest of the day. The space of indulgence, however, was always brief, nor were any private interviews betwixt him and Catherine permitted, or even possible. Whether it were some special precaution respecting the Queen's household, or whether it were her general ideas of propriety, Dame Fleming seemed particularly attentive to prevent the young people from holding any separate correspondence together, and bestowed, for Catherine's sole benefit in this matter, the full stock of prudence and experience which she had acquired when mother of the Queen's maidens of honour, and by which she had gained their hearty hatred. Casual meetings, however, could not be prevented, unless Catherine had been more desirous of shunning, or Roland Græme less anxious in watching for, them. A smile, a gibe, a sarcasm, disarmed of its severity by the arch look with which it was accompanied, was all that time permitted to pass between them on such occasions. But such passing interviews neither afforded means nor opportunity to renew the discussion of the circumstances attending their earlier acquaintance, nor to permit Roland to investigate more accurately the mysterious apparition of the page in the purple velvet cloak at the hostelry of St. Michael's.

The winter months slipped heavily away, and spring was already advanced, when Roland Græme observed a gradual change in the manners of his fellow-prisoners. Having no business of his own to attend to, and being, like those of his age, education, and degree, sufficiently curious concerning what passed around, he began by degrees to suspect, and finally to be convinced, that there was something in agitation among his

companions in captivity to which they did not desire that he should be privy. Nay, he became almost certain that, by some means unintelligible to him, Queen Mary held correspondence beyond the walls and waters which surrounded her prison-house, and that she nourished some secret hope of deliverance or escape. In the conversations betwixt her and her attendants at which he was necessarily present, the Queen could not always avoid showing that she was acquainted with the events which were passing abroad in the world, and which he only heard through her report. He observed that she wrote more and worked less than had been her former custom, and that, as if desirous to lull suspicion asleep, she changed her manner towards the Lady Lochleven into one more gracious, and which seemed to express a resigned submission to her lot. 'They think I am blind,' he said to himself, 'and that I am unfit to be trusted because I am so young, or it may be because I was sent hither by the Regent. Well! be it so; they may be glad to confide in me in the long run; and Catherine Seyton, for as saucy as she is, may find me as safe a confidant as that sullen Douglas, whom she is always running after. It may be they are angry with me for listening to Master Elias Henderson; but it was their own fault for sending me there; and if the man speaks truth and good sense, and preaches only the Word of God, he is as likely to be right as either Pope or councils.'

It is probable that in this last conjecture Roland Grame had hit upon the real cause why the ladies had not entrusted him with their counsels. He had of late had several conferences with Henderson on the subject of religion, and had given him to understand that he stood in need of his instructions, although he had not thought there was either prudence or necessity for confessing that hitherto he had held the tenets of the Church of Rome.

Elias Henderson, a keen propagator of the Reformed faith, had sought the seclusion of Lochleven Castle with the express purpose and expectation of making converts from Rome amongst the domestics of the dethroned Queen, and confirming the faith of those who already held the Protestant doctrines. Perhaps his hopes soared a little higher, and he might nourish some expectation of a proselyte more distinguished, in the person of the deposed Queen. But the pertinacity with which she and her female attendant refused to see or listen to him rendered such hope, if he nourished it, altogether abortive.

The opportunity, therefore, of enlarging the religious information of Roland Græme, and bringing him to a more due sense of his duties to Heaven, was hailed by the good man as a door opened by Providence for the salvation of a sinner. He dreamed not, indeed, that he was converting a Papist, but such was the ignorance which Roland displayed upon some material points of the Reformed doctrine, that Master Henderson, while praising his docility to the Lady Lochleven and her grandson, seldom failed to add, that his venerable brother, Henry Warden, must be now decayed in strength and in mind, since he found a catechumen of his flock so ill-grounded in the principles of his belief. For this, indeed, Roland Græme thought it was unnecessary to assign the true reason, which was his having made it a point of honour to forget all that Henry Warden taught him, as soon as he was no longer compelled to read it over as a lesson acquired by rote. The lessons of his new instructor, if not more impressively delivered, were received by a more willing ear and a more awakened understanding, and the solitude of Lochleven Castle was favourable to graver thoughts than the page had hitherto entertained. He wavered yet, indeed, as one who was almost persuaded; but his attention to the chaplain's instructions procured him favour even with the stern old dame herself; and he was once or twice, but under great precaution, permitted to go to the neighbouring village of Kinross, situated on the mainland, to execute some ordinary commission of his unfortunate mistress.

For some time Roland Græme might be considered as standing neuter betwixt the two parties who inhabited the water-girdled Tower of Lochleven; but, as he rose in the opinion of the lady of the castle and her chaplain, he perceived, with great grief, that he lost ground in that of Mary and her female allies.

He came gradually to be sensible that he was regarded as a spy upon their discourse, and that, instead of the ease with which they had formerly conversed in his presence, without suppressing any of the natural feelings of anger, of sorrow, or mirth which the chance topic of the moment happened to call forth, their talk was now guardedly restricted to the most indifferent subjects, and a studied reserve observed even in their mode of treating these. This obvious want of confidence was accompanied with a correspondent change in their personal demeanour towards the unfortunate page. The Queen, who had at first treated him with marked courtesy, now scarce spoke

to him, save to convey some necessary command for her service. The Lady Fleming restricted her notice to the most dry and distant expressions of civility; and Catherine Seyton became bitter in her pleasantries, and shy, cross, and pettish in any intercourse they had together. What was yet more provoking, he saw, or thought he saw, marks of intelligence betwixt George Douglas and the beautiful Catherine Seyton; and, sharpened by jealousy, he wrought himself almost into a certainty that the looks which they exchanged conveyed matters of deep and serious import. 'No wonder,' he thought, 'if, courted by the son of a proud and powerful baron, she can no longer spare a word or look to the poor fortuneless page.'

In a word, Roland's situation became truly disagreeable, and his heart naturally enough rebelled against the injustice of this treatment, which deprived him of the only comfort which he had received for submitting to a confinement in other respects irksome. He accused Queen Mary and Catherine Seyton (for concerning the opinion of Dame Fleming he was indifferent) of inconsistency in being displeased with him on account of the natural consequences of an order of their own. Why did they send him to hear this overpowering preacher? The Abbot Ambrosius, he recollected, understood the weakness of their Popish cause better, when he enjoined him to repeat within his own mind *aves*, and *credos*, and *paters* all the while old Henry Warden preached or lectured, that so he might secure himself against lending even a momentary ear to his heretical doctrine. 'But I will endure this life no longer,' said he to himself, manfully; 'do they suppose I would betray my mistress, because I see cause to doubt of her religion? That would be a serving, as they say, the devil for God's sake. I will forth into the world; he that serves fair ladies may at least expect kind looks and kind words; and I bear not the mind of a gentleman, to submit to cold treatment and suspicion, and a life-long captivity besides. I will speak to George Douglas to-morrow when we go out a-fishing.'

A sleepless night was spent in agitating this magnanimous resolution, and he arose in the morning not perfectly decided in his own mind whether he should abide by it or not. It happened that he was summoned by the Queen at an unusual hour, and just as he was about to go out with George Douglas. He went to attend her commands in the garden; but, as he had his angling-rod in his hand, the circumstance announced his previous intention, and the Queen, turning to the Lady Fleming,

said, 'Catherine must devise some other amusement for us, *ma bonne amie*: our discreet page has already made his party for the day's pleasure.'

'I said from the beginning,' answered the Lady Fleming, 'that your Grace ought not to rely on being favoured with the company of a youth who has so many Huguenot acquaintances, and has the means of amusing himself far more agreeably than with us.'

'I wish,' said Catherine, her animated features reddening with mortification, 'that his friends would sail away with him for good, and bring us in return a page — if such a thing can be found — faithful to his Queen and to his religion.'

'One part of your wishes may be granted, madam,' said Roland Græme, unable any longer to restrain his sense of the treatment which he received on all sides; and he was about to add, 'I heartily wish you a companion in my room, if such can be found, who is capable of enduring women's caprices without going distracted.' Luckily, he recollected the remorse which he had felt at having given way to the vivacity of his temper upon a similar occasion; and closing his lips, imprisoned, until it died on his tongue, a reproach so misbecoming the presence of majesty.

'Why do you remain there,' said the Queen, 'as if you were rooted to the parterre?'

'I but attend your Grace's commands,' said the page.

'I have none to give you. Begone, sir!'

As he left the garden to go to the boat, he distinctly heard Mary upbraid one of her attendants in these words: 'You see to what you have exposed us!'

This brief scene at once determined Roland Græme's resolution to quit the castle, if it were possible, and to impart his resolution to George Douglas without loss of time. That gentleman, in his usual mood of silence, sate in the stern of the little skiff which they used on such occasions, trimming his fishing-tackle, and, from time to time, indicating by signs to Græme, who pulled the oars, which way he should row. When they were a furlong or two from the castle, Roland rested on the oars, and addressed his companion somewhat abruptly — 'I have something of importance to say to you, under your pleasure, fair sir.'

The pensive melancholy of Douglas's countenance at once gave way to the eager, keen, and startled look of one who expects to hear something of deep and alarming import.

'I am wearied to the very death of this Castle of Lochleven,' continued Roland.

'Is that all?' said Douglas; 'I know none of its inhabitants who are much better pleased with it.'

'Ay — but I am neither a native of the house nor a prisoner in it, and so I may reasonably desire to leave it.'

'You might desire to quit it with equal reason,' answered Douglas, 'if you were both the one and the other.'

'But,' said Roland Græme, 'I am not only tired of living in Lochleven Castle, but I am determined to quit it.'

'That is a resolution more easily taken than executed,' replied Douglas.

'Not if yourself, sir, and your lady mother choose to consent,' answered the page.

'You mistake the matter, Roland,' said Douglas: 'you will find that the consent of two other persons is equally essential — that of the Lady Mary, your mistress, and that of my uncle the Regent, who placed you about her person, and who will not think it proper that she should change her attendants so soon.'

'And must I then remain, whether I will or no?' demanded the page, somewhat appalled at a view of the subject which would have occurred sooner to a person of more experience.

'At least,' said George Douglas, 'you must will to remain till my uncle consents to dismiss you.'

'Frankly,' said the page, 'and speaking to you as a gentleman who is incapable of betraying me, I will confess that, if I thought myself a prisoner here, neither walls nor water should confine me long.'

'Frankly,' said Douglas, 'I could not much blame you for the attempt; yet, for all that, my father, or uncle, or the earl, or any of my brothers, or, in short, any of the King's lords into whose hands you fell, would in such a case hang you like a dog, or like a sentinel who deserts his post; and I promise you that you will hardly escape them. But row towards St. Serf's Island: there is a breeze from the west, and we shall have sport, keeping to windward of the isle, where the ripple is strongest. We will speak more of what you have mentioned when we have had an hour's sport.'

Their fishing was successful, though never did two anglers pursue even that silent and unsocial pleasure with less of verbal intercourse.

When their time was expired, Douglas took the oars in his

turn, and by his order Roland Græme steered the boat, directing her course upon the landing-place at the castle. But he also stopped in the midst of his course, and, looking around him, said to Græme, 'There is a thing which I could mention to thee; but it is so deep a secret that even here, surrounded as we are by sea and sky, without the possibility of a listener, I cannot prevail on myself to speak it out.'

'Better leave it unspoken, sir,' answered Roland Græme, 'if you doubt the honour of him who alone can hear it.'

'I doubt not your honour,' replied George Douglas; 'but you are young, imprudent, and changeful.'

'Young,' said Roland, 'I am, and it may be imprudent; but who hath informed you that I am changeful?'

'One that knows you, perhaps, better than you know yourself,' replied Douglas.

'I suppose you mean Catherine Seyton,' said the page, his heart rising as he spoke; 'but she is herself fifty times more variable in her humour than the very water which we are floating upon.'

'My young acquaintance,' said Douglas, 'I pray you to remember that Catherine Seyton is a lady of blood and birth, and must not be lightly spoken of.'

'Master George of Douglas,' said Græme, 'as that speech seemed to be made under the warrant of something like a threat, I pray you to observe that I value not the threat at the estimation of a fin of one of these dead trouts; and, moreover, I would have you to know that the champion who undertakes the defence of every lady of blood and birth whom men accuse of change of faith and of fashion is like to have enough of work on his hands.'

'Go to,' said the seneschal, but in a tone of good-humour, 'thou art a foolish boy, unfit to deal with any matter more serious than the casting of a net or the flying of a hawk.'

'If your secret concern Catherine Seyton,' said the page, 'I care not for it, and so you may tell her if you will. I wot she can shape you opportunity to speak with her, as she has ere now.'

The flush which passed over Douglas's face made the page aware that he had alighted on a truth when he was, in fact, speaking at random; and the feeling that he had done so was like striking a dagger into his own heart. His companion, without further answer, resumed the oars, and pulled lustily till they arrived at the island and the castle. The servants

received the produce of their spoil, and the two fishers, turning from each other in silence, went each to his several apartment.

Roland Grieme had spent about an hour in grumbling against Catherine Seyton, the Queen, the Regent, and the whole house of Lochleven, with George Douglas at the head of it, when the time approached that his duty called him to attend the meal of Queen Mary. As he arranged his dress for this purpose, he grudged the trouble, which on similar occasions he used, with boyish foppery, to consider as one of the most important duties of his day; and when he went to take his place behind the chair of the Queen, it was with an air of offended dignity which could not escape her observation, and probably appeared to her ridiculous enough, for she whispered something in French to her ladies, at which the Lady Fleming laughed, and Catherine appeared half diverted and half disconcerted. This pleasantry, of which the subject was concealed from him, the unfortunate page received, of course, as a new offence, and called an additional degree of sullen dignity into his mien, which might have exposed him to farther raillery, but that Mary appeared disposed to make allowance for and compassionate his feelings.

With the peculiar tact and delicacy which no woman possessed in greater perfection, she began to soothe by degrees the vexed spirit of her magnanimous attendant. The excellence of the fish which he had taken in his expedition, the high flavour and beautiful red colour of the trouts, which have long given distinction to the lake, led her first to express her thanks to her attendant for so agreeable an addition to her table, especially upon a *jour de jeûne*; and then brought on inquiries into the place where the fish had been taken, their size, their peculiarities, the times when they were in season, and a comparison between the Lochleven trouts and those which are found in the lakes and rivers of the south of Scotland. The ill-humour of Roland Grieme was never of an obstinate character. It rolled away like mist before the sun, and he was easily engaged in a keen and animated dissertation about Lochleven trout, and sea trout, and river trout, and bull trout, and char, which never rise to a fly, and par, which some suppose infant salmon, and 'herlings,' which frequent the Nith, and 'vendisses,' which are only found in the Castle Loch of Lochmaben; and he was hurrying on with the eager impetuosity and enthusiasm of a young sportsman, when he observed that the smile with which the Queen at first listened to him died languidly away, and that, in spite of her efforts to suppress them, tears rose to her eyes. He

stopped suddenly short, and, distressed in his turn, asked, 'if he had had the misfortune unwittingly to give displeasure to her Grace?'

'No, my poor boy,' replied the Queen; 'but, as you numbered up the lakes and rivers of my kingdom, imagination cheated me, as it will do, and snatched me from these dreary walls away to the romantic streams of Nithsdale and the royal towers of Lochmaben. O land, which my fathers have so long ruled! of the pleasures which you extend so freely your Queen is now deprived, and the poorest beggar, who may wander free from one landward town to another, would scorn to change fates with Mary of Scotland!'

'Your Highness,' said the Lady Fleming, 'will do well to withdraw.'

'Come with me then, Fleming,' said the Queen: 'I would not burden hearts so young as these are with the sight of my sorrows.'

She accompanied these words with a look of melancholy compassion towards Roland and Catherine, who were now left alone together in the apartment.

The page found his situation not a little embarrassing; for, as every reader has experienced who may have chanced to be in such a situation, it is extremely difficult to maintain the full dignity of an offended person in the presence of a beautiful girl, whatever reason we may have for being angry with her. Catherine Seyton, on her part, sat still like a lingering ghost, which, conscious of the awe which its presence imposes, is charitably disposed to give the poor confused mortal whom it visits time to recover his senses, and comply with the grand rule of demonology by speaking first. But as Roland seen: not in no hurry to avail himself of her condescension, she carried it a step farther, and herself opened the conversation.

'I pray you, fair sir, if it may be permitted me to disturb your august reverie by a question so simple, what may have become of your rosary?'

'It is lost, madam—lost some time since,' said Roland, partly embarrassed and partly indignant.

'And may I ask farther, sir,' said Catherine, 'why you have not replaced it with another? I have half a mind,' she said, taking from her pocket a string of ebony beads adorned with gold, 'to bestow one upon you, to keep for my sake, just to remind you of former acquaintance.'

There was a little tremulous accent in the tone with which

these words were delivered, which at once put to flight Roland Greene's resentment, and brought him to Catherine's side; but she instantly resumed the bold and firm accent which was more familiar to her. 'I did not bid you,' she said, 'come and sit so close by me; for the acquaintance that I spoke of has been stiff and cold, dead and buried, for this many a day.'

'Now Heaven forbid!' said the page, 'it has only slept; and now that you desire it should awake, fair Catherine, believe me that a pledge of your returning favour —'

'Nay, nay,' said Catherine, withholding the rosary, towards which, as he spoke, he extended his hand, 'I have changed my mind on better reflection. What should a heretic do with these holy beads, that have been blessed by the Father of the church himself?'

Roland winced grievously, for he saw plainly which way the discourse was now likely to tend, and felt that it must at all events be embarrassing. 'Nay, but,' he said, 'it was as a token of your own regard that you offered them.'

'Ay, fair sir, but that regard attended the faithful subject, the loyal and pious Catholic, the individual who was so solemnly devoted at the same time with myself to the same grand duty; which, you must now understand, was to serve the church and Queen. To such a person, if you ever heard of him, was my regard due, and not to him who associates with heretics, and is about to become a renegade.'

'I should scarce believe, fair mistress,' said Roland, indignantly, 'that the vane of your favour turned only to a Catholic wind, considering that it points so plainly to George Douglas, who, I think, is both kingsman and Protestant.'

'Think better of George Douglas,' said Catherine, 'than to believe —' and then checking herself, as if she had spoken too much, she went on, 'I assure you, fair Master Roland, that all who wish you well are sorry for you.'

'Their number is very few, I believe,' answered Roland, 'and their sorrow, if they feel any, not deeper than ten minutes' time will cure.'

'They are more numerous, and think more deeply concerning you, than you seem to be aware,' answered Catherine. 'But perhaps they think wrong. You are the best judge in your own affairs; and if you prefer gold and church lands to honour and loyalty, and the faith of your fathers, why should you be hampered in conscience more than others?'

'May Heaven bear witness for me,' said Roland, 'that if I

entertain any difference of opinion — that is, if I nourish any doubts in point of religion, they have been adopted on the conviction of my own mind, and the suggestion of my own conscience !’

‘Ay, ay, your conscience — your conscience !’ repeated she with satiric emphasis — ‘your conscience is the scape-goat ; I warrant it an able one : it will bear the burden of one of the best manors of the Abbey of St. Mary of Kennaquhair, lately forfeited to our noble Lord the King by the abbot and community thereof, for the high crime of fidelity to their religious v — and now to be granted by the High and Mighty Traitor, and so forth, James Earl of Murray, to the good squire of dames, Roland Graeme, for his loyal and faithful service as under-espial and deputy-turnkey for securing the person of his lawful sovereign, Queen Mary.’

‘You misconstrue me cruelly,’ said the page — ‘yes, Catherine, most cruelly. God knows I would protect this poor lady at the risk of my life, or with my life ; but what can I do — what can any one do for her ?’

‘Much may be done — enough may be done — all may be done — if men will be but true and honourable, as Scottish men were in the days of Bruce and Wallace. Oh, Roland, from what an enterprise you are now withdrawing your heart and hand, through mere fickleness and coldness of spirit !’

‘How can I withdraw,’ said Roland, ‘from an enterprise which has never been communicated to me ? Has the Queen, or have you, or has any one, communicated with me upon anything for her service which I have refused ? Or have you not, all of you, held me at such a distance from your counsels as if I were the most faithless spy since the days of Ganelon ?’¹

‘And who,’ said Catherine Seyton, ‘would trust the sworn friend, and pupil, and companion of the heretic preacher Henderson ? Ay, a proper tutor you have chosen, instead of the excellent Ambrosius, who is now turned out of house and homestead, if indeed he is not languishing in a dungeon, for withstanding the tyranny of Morton, to whose brother the temporalities of that noble house of God have been gifted away by the Regent.’

‘Is it possible ?’ said the page ; ‘and is the excellent Father Ambrose in such distress ?’

‘He would account the news of your falling away from th

¹ See Note 17.

faith of your fathers,' answered Catherine, 'a worse mishap than aught that tyranny can inflict on himself.'

'But why,' said Roland, very much moved — 'why should you suppose that — that — that it is with me as you say?'

'Do you yourself deny it?' replied Catherine; 'do you not admit that you have drunk the poison which you should have dashed from your lips? Do you deny that it now ferments in your veins, if it has not altogether corrupted the springs of life? Do you deny that you have your doubts, as you proudly term them, respecting what popes and councils have declared it unlawful to doubt of? Is not your faith wavering, if not overthrown? Does not the heretic preacher boast his conquest? Does not the heretic woman of this prison-house hold up thy example to others? Do not the Queen and the Lady Fleming believe in thy falling away? And is there any except one — yes, I will speak it out, and think as lightly as you please of my good-will — is there one except myself that holds even a lingering hope that you may yet prove what we once all believed of you?'

'I know not,' said our poor page, much embarrassed by the view which was thus presented to him of the conduct he was expected to pursue, and by a person in whom he was not the less interested that so long a residence in Lochleven Castle, with no object so likely to attract his undivided attention, had taken place since they had first met — 'I know not what you expect of me, or fear from me. I was sent hither to attend Queer Mary, and to her I acknowledge the duty of a servant through life and death. If any one had expected service of another kind, I was not the party to render it. I neither avow nor disclaim the doctrines of the Reformed Church. Will you have the truth? It seems to me that the profligacy of the Catholic clergy has brought this judgment on their own heads, and, for aught I know, it may be for their reformation. But, for betraying this unhappy Queen, God knows I am guiltless of the thought. Did I even believe worse of her than as her servant I wish — as her subject I dare — to do, I would not betray her; far from it — I would aid her in aught which could tend to a fair trial of her cause.'

'Enough! — enough!' answered Catherine, clasping her hands together; 'then thou wilt not desert us if any means are presented by which, placing our royal mistress at freedom, this case may be honestly tried betwixt her and her rebellious subjects?'

'Nay, but, fair Catherine,' replied the page, 'hear but what the Lord of Murray said when he sent me hither——'

'Hear but what the devil said,' replied the maiden, 'rather than what a false subject, a false brother, a false counsellor, a false friend said! A man raised from a petty pensioner on the crown's bounty to be the counsellor of majesty, and the prime distributor of the bounties of the state; one with whom rank, fortune, title, consequence, and power all grew up like a mushroom by the mere warm good-will of the sister whom, in requital, he hath mewed up in this place of melancholy seclusion; whom, in further requital, he has deposed; and whom, if he dared, he would murder!'

'I think not so ill of the Earl of Murray,' said Roland Graeme; 'and sooth to speak,' he added, with a smile, 'it would require some bribe to make me embrace, with firm and desperate resolution, either one side or the other.'

'Nay, if that is all,' replied Catherine Seyton, in a tone of enthusiasm, 'you shall be guerdoned with prayers from oppressed subjects — from dispossessed clergy — from insulted nobles — with immortal praise by future ages — with eager gratitude by the present — with fame on earth and with felicity in Heaven! Your country will thank you — your Queen will be debtor to you — you will achieve at once the highest from the lowest degree in chivalry — all men will honour, all women will love you — and I, sworn with you so early to the accomplishment of Queen Mary's freedom, will — yes, I will love you better than — ever sister loved brother!'

'Say on — say on!' whispered Roland, kneeling on one knee, and taking her hand, which, in the warmth of exhortation, Catherine held towards him.

'Nay,' said she, pausing, 'I have already said too much — far too much if I prevail not with you, far too little if I do. But I prevail,' she continued, seeing that the countenance of the youth she addressed returned the enthusiasm of her own — 'I prevail; or rather the good cause prevails through its own strength — thus I devote thee to it.' And as she spoke she approached her finger to the brow of the astonished youth, and, without touching it, signed the cross over his forehead; stooped her face towards him, and seemed to kiss the empty space in which she had traced the symbol; then starting up, and extricating herself from his grasp, darted into the Queen's apartment.

Roland Graeme remained as the enthusiastic maiden had left

him, kneeling on one knee, with breath withheld, and with eyes fixed upon the space which the fairy form of Catherine Seyton had so lately occupied. If his thoughts were not of unmixed delight, they at least partook of that thrilling and intoxicating, though mingled, sense of pain and pleasure, the most overpowering which life offers in its blended cup. He rose and retired slowly ; and although the chaplain, Mr. Henderson, preached on that evening his best sermon against the errors of Popery, I would not engage that he was followed accurately through the train of his reasoning by the young proselyte, with a view to whose especial benefit he had handled the subject.

CHAPTER XXV

And when Love's torch hath set the heart in flame,
Comes Seignor Reason, with his saws and cautions,
Giving such aid as the old grey-beard sexton,
Who from the church-vault drags his crazy engine,
To ply its dribbling ineffectual streamlet
Against a conflagration.

Old Play.

IN a musing mood, Roland Græme upon the ensuing morning betook himself to the battlements of the castle, as a spot where he might indulge the course of his thick-coming fancies with least chance of interruption. But his place of retirement was in the present case ill chosen, for he was presently joined by Mr. Elias Henderson.

'I sought you, young man,' said the preacher, 'having to speak of something which concerns you nearly.'

The page had no pretence for avoiding the conference which the chaplain thus offered, though he felt that it might prove an embarrassing one.

'In teaching thee, as far as my feeble knowledge hath permitted, thy duty towards God,' said the chaplain, 'there are particulars of your duty towards man upon which I was unwilling long or much to insist. You are here in the service of a lady, honourable as touching her birth, deserving of all compassion as respects her misfortunes, and garnished with even but too many of those outward qualities which win men's regard and affection. Have you ever considered your regard to this Lady Mary of Scotland in its true light and bearing?'

'I trust, reverend sir,' replied Roland Græme, 'that I am well aware of the duties a servant in my condition owes to his royal mistress, especially in her lowly and distressed condition.'

'True,' answered the preacher; 'but it is even that honest feeling which may, in the Lady Mary's case, carry thee into great crime and treachery.'

'How so, reverend sir?' replied the page; 'I profess I understand you not.'

'I speak to you not of the crimes of this ill-advised lady,' said the preacher; 'they are not subjects for the ears of her sworn servant. But it is enough to say that this unhappy person hath rejected more offers of grace, more hopes of glory, than ever were held out to earthly princes; and that she is now, her day of favour being passed, sequestered in this lonely castle, for the commonweal of the people of Scotland, and it may be for the benefit of her own soul.'

'Reverend sir,' said Roland, somewhat impatiently, 'I am but too well aware that my unfortunate mistress is imprisoned, since I have the misfortune to share in her restraint myself, which, to speak sooth, I am heartily weary.'

'It is even of that which I am about to speak,' said the chaplain, mildly; 'but first, my good Roland, look forth on the pleasant prospect of yonder cultivated plain. You see, where the smoke arises, yonder village standing half-hidden by the trees, and you know it to be the dwelling-place of peace and industry. From space to space, each by the side of its own stream, you see the grey towers of barons, with cottages interspersed; and you know that they also, with their household, are now living in unity—the lance hung upon the wall and the sword resting in its sheath. You see, too, more than one fair church where the pure waters of life are offered to the thirsty, and where the hungry are refreshed with spiritual food. What would he deserve who should bring fire and slaughter into so fair and happy a scene—who should bare the swords of the gentry and turn them against each other—who should give tower and cottage to the flames, and slake the embers with the blood of the indwellers? What would he deserve who should lift up again that ancient Dagon of superstition whom the worthies of the time have beaten down, and who should once more make the churches of God the high places of Baal?'

'You have limned a frightful picture, reverend sir,' said Roland Græme; 'yet I guess not whom you would charge with the purpose of effecting a change so horrible.'

'God forbid,' replied the preacher, 'that I should say to thee, thou art the man. Yet beware, Roland Græme, that thou, in serving thy mistress, hold fast the still higher service which thou owest to the peace of thy country and the prosperity of her inhabitants; else, Roland Græme, thou mayest be the very man upon whose head will fall the curses and assured punish-

ment due to such work. If thou art won by the song of these sirens to aid that unhappy lady's escape from this place of penitence and security, it is over with the peace of Scotland's cottages and with the prosperity of her palaces; and the babe unborn shall curse the name of the man who gave inlet to the disorder which will follow the war betwixt the mother and the son.'

'I know of no such plan, reverend sir,' answered the page, 'and therefore can aid none such. My duty towards the Queen has been simply that of an attendant; it is a task of which, at times, I would willingly have been freed; nevertheless —'

'It is to prepare thee for the enjoyment of something more of liberty,' said the preacher, 'that I have endeavoured to impress upon you the deep responsibility under which your office must be discharged. George Douglas hath told the Lady Lochleven that you are weary of this service, and my intercession hath partly determined her good ladyship that, as your discharge cannot be granted, you shall, instead, be employed in certain commissions on the mainland, which have hitherto been discharged by other persons of confidence. Wherefore, come with me to the lady, for even to-day such duty will be imposed on you.'

'I trust you will hold me excused, reverend sir,' said the page, who felt that an increase of confidence on the part of the lady of the castle and her family would render his situation in a moral view doubly embarrassing, 'one cannot serve two masters; and I much fear that my mistress will not hold me excused for taking employment under another.'

'Fear not that,' said the preacher; 'her consent shall be asked and obtained. I fear she will yield it but too easily, as hoping to avail herself of your agency to maintain correspondence with her friends, as those falsely call themselves who would make her name the watchword for civil war.'

'And thus,' said the page, 'I shall be exposed to suspicion on all sides; for my mistress will consider me as a spy placed on her by her enemies, seeing me so far trusted by them; and the Lady Lochleven will never cease to suspect the possibility of my betraying her, because circumstances put it into my power to do so; I would rather remain as I am.'

There followed a pause of one or two minutes, during which Henderson looked steadily in Roland's countenance, as if desirous to ascertain whether there was not more in the answer than the precise words seemed to imply. He failed in this point, however; for Roland, bred a page from childhood, knew

how to assume a sullen pettish cast of countenance, well enough calculated to hide all internal emotions.

I understand thee not, Roland,' said the preacher, 'or rather thou thinkest on this matter more deeply than I apprehended to be in thy nature. Methought the delight of going on shore with thy bow, or thy gun, or thy angling-rod, would have borne away all other feelings.'

'And so it would,' replied Roland, who perceived the danger of suffering Henderson's half-raised suspicions to become fully awake — 'I would have thought of nothing but the gun and the oar, and the wild water-fowl that tempt me by sailing among the sedges yonder so far out of flight-shot, had you not spoken of my going on shore as what was to occasion burning of town and tower, the downfall of the Evangel, and the upsetting of the mass.'

'Follow me, then,' said Henderson, 'and we will seek the Lady Lochleven.'

They found her at breakfast with her grandson George Douglas. 'Peace be with your ladyship!' said the preacher, bowing to his patroness; 'Roland Grieme awaits your order.'

'Young man,' said the lady, 'our chaplain hath warranted for thy fidelity, and we are determined to give you certain errands to do for us in our town of Kinross.'

'Not by my advice,' said Douglas, coldly.

'I said not that it was,' answered the lady, something sharply. 'The mother of thy father may, I should think, be old enough to judge for herself in a matter so simple. Thou wilt take the skiff, Roland, and two of my people, whom Dryfesdale or Randal will order out, and fetch off certain stuff of plate and hangings which should last night be lodged at Kinross by the wains from Edinburgh.'

'And give this packet,' said George Douglas, 'to a servant of ours, whom you will find in waiting there. It is the report to my father,' he added, looking towards his grandmother, who acquiesced by bending her head.

'I have already mentioned to Master Henderson,' said Roland Grieme, 'that, as my duty requires my attendance on the Queen, her Grace's permission for my journey ought to be obtained before I can undertake your commission.'

'Look to it, my son,' said the old lady, 'the scruple of the youth is honourable.'

'Craving your pardon, madam, I have no wish to force myself on her presence thus early,' said Douglas, in an indif-

ferent tone ; 'it might displease her, and were no way agreeable to me.'

'And I,' said the Lady Lochleven, 'although her temper hath been more gentle of late, have no will to undergo, without necessity, the rancour of her wit.'

'Under your permission, madam,' said the chaplain, 'I will myself render your request to the Queen. During my long residence in this house she hath not deigned to see me in private, or to hear my doctrine ; yet so may Heaven prosper my labours, as love for her soul, and desire to bring her into the right path, was my chief motive for coming hither.'

'Take care, Master Henderson,' said Douglas, in a tone which seemed almost sarcastic, 'lest you rush hastily on an adventure to which you have no vocation ; you are learned, and know the adage, *Ne accesseris in consilium nisi vocatus*. Who hath required this at your hand ?'

'The Master to whose service I am called,' answered the preacher, looking upward — 'He who hath commanded me to be earnest in season and out of season.'

'Your acquaintance hath not been much, I think, with courts or princes,' continued the young esquire.

'No, sir,' replied Henderson, 'but, like my master Knox, I see nothing frightful in the fair face of a pretty lady.'

'My son,' said the Lady of Lochleven, 'quench not the good man's zeal : let him do the errand to this unhappy princess.'

'With more willingness than I would do it myself,' said George Douglas. Yet something in his manner appeared to contradict his words.

The minister went accordingly, followed by Roland Grame, and, demanding an audience of the imprisoned princess, was admitted. He found her with her ladies engaged in the daily task of embroidery. The Queen received him with that courtesy which, in ordinary cases, she used towards all who approached her, and the clergyman, in opening his commission, was obviously somewhat more embarrassed than he had expected to be. 'The good Lady of Lochleven, may it please your Grace —'

He made a short pause, during which Mary said, with a smile, 'My Grace would, in truth, be well pleased were the Lady of Lochleven our good lady ; but go on — what is the will of the good Lady of Lochleven ?'

'She desires, madam,' said the chaplain, 'that your Grace will permit this young gentleman, your page, Roland Grame, to be to Kinross, to look after some household stuff and

hangings, sent hither for the better furnishing your Grace's apartments.'

'The Lady of Lochleven,' said the Queen, 'uses needless ceremony, in requesting our permission for that which stands within her own pleasure. We well know that this young gentleman's attendance on us had not been so long permitted were he not thought to be more at the command of that good lady than at ours. But we cheerfully yield consent that he shall go on her errand; with our will we would doom no living creature to the captivity which we ourselves must suffer.'

'Ay, madam,' answered the preacher, 'and it is doubtless natural for humanity to quarrel with its prison-house. Yet there have been those who have found that time spent in the house of temporal captivity may be so employed as to redeem us from spiritual slavery.'

'I apprehend your meaning, sir,' replied the Queen, 'but I have heard your apostle — I have heard Master John Knox; and were I to be perverted, I would willingly resign to the ablest and most powerful of heresiarchs the poor honour he might acquire by overcoming my faith and my hope.'

'Madam,' said the preacher, 'it is not to the talents or skill of the husbandman that God gives the increase: the words which were offered in vain by him whom you justly call our apostle, during the bustle and gaiety of a court, may yet find better acceptance during the leisure for reflection which this place affords. God knows, lady, that I speak in singleness of heart, as one who would as soon compare himself to the immortal angels as to the holy man whom you have named. Yet would you but condescend to apply to their noblest use those talents and that learning which all allow you to be possessed of — would you afford us but the slightest hope that you would hear and regard what can be urged against the blinded superstition and idolatry in which you were brought up, sure am I, that the most powerfully gifted of my brethren, that even John Knox himself, would hasten hither, and account the rescue of your single soul from the nets of Romish error —'

'I am obliged to you and to them for their charity,' said Mary; 'but as I have at present but one presence-chamber, I would reluctantly see it converted into a Huguenot synod.'

'At least, madam, be not thus obstinately blinded in your errors! Hear one who has hungered and thirsted, watched and prayed, to undertake the good work of your conversion, and who would be content to die the instant that a work so

advantageous for yourself and so beneficial to Scotland were accomplished. Yes, lady, could I but shake the remaining pillar of the heathen temple in this land — and that permit me to term your faith in the delusions of Rome — I could be content to die overwhelmed in the ruins !

‘I will not insult your zeal, sir,’ replied Mary, ‘by saying you are more likely to make sport for the Philistines than to overwhelm them : your charity claims my thanks, for it is warmly expressed, and may be truly purposed. But believe as well of me as I am willing to do of you, and think that I may be as anxious to recall you to the ancient and only road as you are to teach me your new by-ways to Paradise.’

‘Then, madam, if such be your generous purpose,’ said Henderson, eagerly, ‘what hinders that we should dedicate some part of that time unhappily now too much at your Grace’s disposal to discuss a question so weighty ? You, by report of all men, are both learned and witty ; and I, though without such advantages, am strong in my cause as in a tower of defence. Why should we not spend some space in endeavouring to discover which of us hath the wrong side in this important matter ?’

‘Nay,’ said Queen Mary, ‘I never alleged my force was strong enough to accept of a combat *en champ clos* with a scholar and a polemic. Besides, the match is not equal. You, sir, might retire when you felt the battle go against you, while I am tied to the stake, and have no permission to say the debate wearies me. I would be alone.’

She courtesied low to him as she uttered these words ; and Henderson, whose zeal was indeed ardent, but did not extend to the neglect of delicacy, bowed in return, and prepared to withdraw.

‘I would,’ he said, ‘that my earnest wish, my most zealous prayer, could procure to your Grace any blessing or comfort, but especially that in which alone blessing or comfort is, as easily as the slightest intimation of your wish will remove me from your presence.’

He was in the act of departing, when Mary said to him with much courtesy, ‘Do me no injury in your thoughts, good sir : it may be, that if my time here be protracted longer — as surely I hope it will not, trusting that either my rebel subjects will repent of their disloyalty, or that my faithful lieges will obtain the upper hand — but if my time be here protracted, it may be I shall have no displeasure in hearing one who seems so reasonable and compassionate as yourself, and I may hazard your

contempt by endeavouring to recollect and repeat the reasons which schoolmen and councils give for the faith that is in me, although I fear that, God help me! my Latin has deserted me with my other possessions. This must, however, be for another day. Meanwhile, sir, let the Lady of Lochleven employ my page as she lists; I will not afford suspicion by speaking a word to him before he goes. Roland Græme, my friend, lose not an opportunity of amusing thyself: dance, sing, run, and leap — all may be done merrily on the mainland; but he must have more than quicksilver in his veins who would frolic here.'

'Alas! madam,' said the preacher, 'to what is it you exhort the youth, while time passes and eternity summons! Can our salvation be ensured by idle mirth, or our good work wrought out without fear and trembling?'

'I cannot fear or tremble,' replied the Queen: 'to Mary Stewart such emotions are unknown. But, if weeping and sorrow on my part will atone for the boy's enjoying an hour of boyish pleasure, be assured the penance shall be duly paid.'

'Nay, but, gracious lady,' said the preacher, 'in this you greatly err: our tears and our sorrows are all too little for our own faults and follies, nor can we transfer them, as your church falsely teaches, to the benefit of others.'

'May I pray you, sir,' answered the Queen, 'with as little offence as such a prayer may import, to transfer yourself elsewhere? We are sick at heart, and may not now be disturbed with further controversy; and thou, Roland, take this little purse' — 'Then turning to the divine, she said, showing its contents, — 'Look, reverend sir, it contains only these two or three gold testoons — a coin which, though bearing my own poor features, I have ever found more active against me than on my side, just as my subjects take arms against me, with my own name for their summons and signal. Take this purse that thou mayest want no means of amusement. Fail not — fail not to bring me back news from Kinross; only let it be such as, without suspicion or offence, may be told in the presence of this reverend gentleman, or of the good Lady Lochleven herself.'

The last hint was too irresistible to be withstood; and Henderson withdrew, half-mortified, half-pleased with his reception; for Mary, from long habit and the address which was natural to her, had learned, in an extraordinary degree, the art of evading discourse which was disagreeable to her feelings or prejudices, without affronting those by whom it was proffered.

Roland Græme retired with the chaplain at a signal from

his lady ; but it did not escape him that, as he left the room, stepping backwards and making the deep obeisance due to royalty, Catherine Seyton held up her slender forefinger, with a gesture which he alone could witness, and which seemed to say, 'Remember what has passed betwixt us.'

The young page had now his last charge from the Lady of Lochleven. 'There are revels,' she said, 'this day at the village. My son's authority is, as yet, unable to prevent these continued workings of the ancient leaven of folly which the Romish priests have kneaded into the very souls of the Scottish peasantry. I do not command thee to abstain from them — that would be only to lay a snare for thy folly, or to teach thee falsehood ; but enjoy these vanities with moderation, and mark them as something thou must soon learn to renounce and condemn. Our chamberlain at Kinross, Luke Lundin — Doctor, as he foolishly calleth himself — will acquaint thee what is to be done in the matter about which thou goest. Remember thou art trusted ; show thyself, therefore, worthy of trust.'

When we recollect that Roland Græme was not yet nineteen, and that he had spent his whole life in the solitary Castle of Avenel, excepting the few hours he had passed in Edinburgh, and his late residence at Lochleven, the latter period having very little served to enlarge his acquaintance with the gay world, we cannot wonder that his heart beat high with hope and curiosity at the prospect of partaking the sport even of a country wake. He hastened to his little cabin, and turned over the wardrobe with which, in every respect becoming his station, he had been supplied from Edinburgh, probably by order of the Earl of Murray. By the Queen's command he had hitherto waited upon her in mourning, or at least in sad-coloured raiment. Her condition, she said, admitted of nothing more gay. But now he selected the gayest dress his wardrobe afforded, composed of scarlet, slashed with black satin — the royal colours of Scotland ; combed his long curled hair ; disposed his chain and medal round a beaver hat of the newest block ; and with the gay falchion which had reached him in so mysterious a manner hung by his side in an embroidered belt, his apparel, added to his natural frank mien and handsome figure, formed a most commendable and pleasing specimen of the young gallant of the period. He sought to make his parting reverence to the Queen and her ladies, but old Dryfesdale hurried him to the boat.

'We will have no private audiences,' he said, 'my master ;

since you are to be trusted with somewhat, we will try at least to save thee from the temptation of opportunity. God help thee, child,' he added, with a glance of contempt at his gay clothes, 'an the bear-ward be yonder from St. Andrews, have a care thou go not near him.'

'And wherefore, I pray you?' said Roland.

'Lest he take thee for one of his runaway jackanapes,' answered the steward, smiling sourly.

'I wear not my clothes at thy cost,' said Roland, indignantly.

'Nor at thine own either, my son,' replied the steward, 'else would thy garb more nearly resemble thy merit and thy station.'

Roland Græme suppressed with difficulty the repartee which arose to his lips, and, wrapping his scarlet mantle around him, threw himself into the boat, which two rowers, themselves urged by curiosity to see the revels, pulled stoutly towards the west end of the lake. As they put off, Roland thought he could discover the face of Catherine Seyton, though carefully withdrawn from observation, peeping from a loophole to view his departure. He pulled off his hat, and held it up as a token that he saw and wished her adieu. A white kerchief waved for a second across the window, and for the rest of the little voyage the thoughts of Catherine Seyton disputed ground in his breast with the expectations excited by the approaching revel. As they drew nearer and nearer the shore, the sounds of mirth and music, the laugh, the halloo, and the shout came thicker upon the ear, and in a trice the boat was moored, and Roland Græme hastened in quest of the chamberlain, that, being informed what time he had at his own disposal, he might lay it out to the best advantage.

CHAPTER XXVI

Room for the master of the ring, ye swains,
Divide your crowded ranks; before him march
The rural minstrelsy, the rattling drum,
The clamorous war-pipe, and far-echoing horn.

SOMERVILLE, *Rural Sports*.

NO long space intervened ere Roland Græme was able to discover among the crowd of revellers, who gambolled upon the open space which extends betwixt the village and the lake, a person of so great importance as Dr. Luke Lundin, upon whom devolved officially the charge of representing the lord of the land, and who was attended for support of his authority by a piper, a drummer, and four sturdy clowns armed with rusty halberds, garnished with party-coloured ribbons — myrmidons who, early as the day was, had already broken more than one head in the awful names of the Laird of Lochleven and his chamberlain.¹

As soon as this dignitary was informed that the castle skiff had arrived, with a gallant, dressed like a lord's son at the least, who desired presently to speak to him, he adjusted his ruff and his black coat, turned round his girdle till the garnished hilt of his long rapier became visible, and walked with due solemnity towards the beach. Solemn indeed he was entitled to be, even on less important occasions, for he had been bred to the venerable study of medicine, as those acquainted with the science very soon discovered from the aphorisms which ornamented his discourse. His success had not been equal to his pretensions; but as he was a native of the neighbouring kingdom of Fife, and bore distant relation to, or dependence upon, the ancient family of Lundin of that ilk, who were bound in close friendship with the house of Lochleven, he had, through their interest, got planted comfortably enough in his present station upon the banks of that beautiful lake. The profits of his chamberlainship being moderate, especially in those unsettled times, he

¹ See Scottish Fairs. Note 18.

had eked it out a little with some practice in his original profession; and it was said that the inhabitants of the village and barony of Kinross were not more effectually thirled (which may be translated enthralled) to the baron's mill than they were to the medical monopoly of the chamberlain. Woe betide the family of the rich boor who presumed to depart this life without a passport from Dr. Luke Lundin! for if his representatives had aught to settle with the baron, as it seldom happened otherwise, they were sure to find a cold friend in the chamberlain. He was considerate enough, however, gratuitously to help the poor out of their ailments, and sometimes out of all their other distresses at the same time.

Formal, in a double proportion, both as a physician and as a person in office, and proud of the scraps of learning which rendered his language almost universally unintelligible, Dr. Luke Lundin approached the beach, and hailed the page as he advanced towards him. 'The freshness of the morning upon you, fair sir. You are sent, I warrant me, to see if we observe here the regimen which her good ladyship hath prescribed, for eschewing all superstitious ceremonies and idle anilities in these our revels. I am aware that her good ladyship would willingly have altogether abolished and abrogated them. But as I had the honour to quote to her from the works of the learned Hercules of Saxony, *omnis curatio est vel canonica vel coacta* — that is, fair sir — for silk and velvet have seldom their Latin *ad unguem* — every cure must be wrought either by art and induction of rule or by constraint; and the wise physician chooseth the former. Which argument her ladyship being pleased to allow well of, I have made it my business so to blend instruction and caution with delight — *fiat mirtio*, as we say — that I can answer that the vulgar mind will be defecated and purged of anile and Popish fooleries by the medicament adhibited, so that the *primæ viæ* being cleansed, Master Henderson, or any other able pastor, may at will throw in tonics, and effectuate a perfect moral cure, *tuto, cito, jucunde*.'

'I have no charge, Doctor Lundin,' replied the page —

'Call me not doctor,' said the chamberlain, 'since I have laid aside my furred gown and bonnet, and retired me into this temporality of chamberlainship.'

'Oh, sir,' said the page, who was no stranger by report to the character of this original, 'the cowl makes not the monk, neither the cord the friar: we have all heard of the cures wrought by Doctor Lundin.'

'Toys, young sir — trifles,' answered the leech, with grave disclamation of superior skill; 'the hit-or-miss practice of a poor retired gentleman, in a short cloak and doublet. Marry, Heaven sent its blessing; and this I must say, better fashioned mediciners have brought fewer patients through — *lunga roba corta scienza*, saith the Italian — ha, fair sir, you have the language?'

Roland Græme did not think it necessary to expound to this learned Theban whether he understood him or no; but, leaving that matter uncertain, he told him he came in quest of certain packages which should have arrived at Kinross and been placed under the chamberlain's charge the evening before.

'Body o' me!' said Doctor Lundin, 'I fear our common carrier, John Auchtermuchty, hath met with some mischance, that he came not up last night with his wains: bad land this to journey in, my master; and the fool will travel by night too, although — besides all maladies, from your *tussis* to your *pestis*, which walk abroad in the night air — he may well fall in with half a dozen swashbucklers, who will ease him at once of his baggage and his earthly complaints. I must send forth to inquire after him, since he hath stuff of the honourable household on hand; and, by Our Lady, he hath stuff of mine too — certain drugs sent me from the city for composition of my alexipharmics; this gear must be looked to. Hodge,' said he, addressing one of his redoubted body-guard, 'do thou and Toby Telford take the mickle brown aver and the black cut-tailed mare, and make out towards the Keiry Craigs,¹ and see what tidings you can have of Auchtermuchty and his wains; I trust it is only the medicine of the pottle-pot — being the only *medicamentum* which the beast useth — which hath caused him to tarry on the road. Take the ribbons from your halberds, ye knaves, and get on your jacks, plate-sleeves, and knapskulls, that your presence may work some terror if you meet with opposers.' He then added, turning to Roland Græme, 'I warrant me we shall have news of the wains in brief season. Meantime it will please you to look upon the sports; but first to enter my poor lodging and take your morning's cup. For what saith the school of Salerno —

Poculum, mane haustum,
 Restaurat naturam exhaustam ?

'Your learning is too profound for me,' replied the page; 'and so would your draught be likewise, I fear.'

¹ See Note 19.

'Not a whit, fair sir : a cordial cup of sack, impregnated with wormwood, is the best anti-pestilential draught ; and, to speak truth, the pestilential miasmata are now very rife in the atmosphere. We live in a happy time, young man,' continued he, in a tone of grave irony, 'and have many blessings unknown to our fathers. Here are two sovereigns in the land, a regnant and a claimant ; that is enough of one good thing, but, if any one wants more, he may find a king in every peel-house in the country ; so, if we lack government, it is not for want of governors. Then have we a civil war to phlebotomise us every year, and to prevent our population from starving for want of food ; and for the same purpose we have the plague proposing us a visit, the best of all recipes for thinning a land, and converting younger brothers into elder ones. Well, each man in his vocation. You young fellows of the sword desire to wrestle, fence, or so forth with some expert adversary ; and for my part, I love to match myself for life or death against that same plague.'

As they proceeded up the street of the little village towards the doctor's lodgings, his attention was successively occupied by the various personages whom he met, and pointed out to the notice of his companion.

'Do you see that fellow with the red bonnet, the blue jerkin, and the great rough baton in his hand ? I believe that clown hath the strength of a tower : he has lived fifty years in the world, and never encouraged the liberal sciences by buying one pennyworth of medicaments. But see you that man with the *facies Hippocratica* ?' said he, pointing out a thin peasant, with swelled legs, and a most cadaverous countenance ; 'that I call one of the worthiest men in the barony : he breakfasts, luncheons, dines, and sups by my advice, and not without my medicine ; and, for his own single part, will go farther to clear out a moderate stock of pharmaceutics than half the country besides. How do you, my honest friend ?' said he to the party in question, with a tone of condolence.

'Very weakly, sir, since I took the electuary,' answered the patient ; 'it neighboured ill with the two spoonfuls of pease-porridge and the kirm-milk.'

'Pease-porridge and kirm-milk ! Have you been under medicine these ten years, and keep your diet so ill ? The next morning take the electuary by itself, and touch nothing for six hours.' The poor object bowed and limped off.

The next whom the doctor deigned to take notice of was a

lame fellow, by whom the honour was altogether undeserved, for at sight of the mediciner he began to shuffle away in the crowd as fast as his infirmities would permit.

'There is an ungrateful hound for you,' said Doctor Lundin : 'I cured him of the gout in his feet, and now he talks of the chargeableness of medicine, and makes the first use of his restored legs to fly from his physician. His *podagra* hath become a *chiragra*, as honest Martial hath it : the gout has got into his fingers, and he cannot draw his purse. Old saying and true—

Præmia cum poscit medicus, Sathan est.

We are angels when we come to cure, devils when we ask payment ; but I will administer a purgation to his purse, I warrant him. There is his brother too, a sordid chuff. So ho, there ! Saunders Darlet ! you have been ill, I hear ?'

'Just got the turn, as I was thinking to send to your honour, and I am brawly now again ; it was nae great thing that ailed me.'

'Hark you, sirrah,' said the doctor, 'I trust you remember you are owing to the laird four stones of barley-meal and a bow of oats ; and I would have you send no more such kain-fowls as you sent last season, that looked as wretchedly as patients just dismissed from a plague-hospital ; and there is hard money owing ; besides.'

'I was thinking, sir,' said the man, *more Scotico*, that is, returning no direct answer on the subject on which he was addressed, 'my best way would be to come down to your honour, and take your advice yet in case my trouble should come back.'

'Do so then, knave,' replied Lundin, 'and remember what Ecclesiasticus saith — "Give place to the physician : let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him."'

His exhortation was interrupted by an apparition which seemed to strike the doctor with as much horror and surprise as his own visage inflicted upon sundry of those persons whom he had addressed.

The figure which produced this effect on the Esculapius of the village was that of a tall old woman, who wore a high-crowned hat and muffler. The first of these habiliments added apparently to her stature, and the other served to conceal the lower part of her face, and as the hat itself was slouched, little could be seen besides two brown cheek-bones, and the eyes of swarthy fire, that gleamed from under two shaggy grey eye-

brows. She was dressed in a long dark-coloured robe of unusual fashion, bordered at the skirts and on the stomacher with a sort of white trimming resembling the Jewish phylacteries, on which were wrought the characters of some unknown language. She held in her hand a walking-staff of black ebony.

'By the soul of Celsus,' said Dr. Luke Lundin, 'it is old Mother Nicneven herself; she hath come to beard me within mine own bounds, and in the very execution of mine office! "Have at thy coat, old woman," as the song says. Hob Anster, let her presently be seized and committed to the tolbooth; and if there are any zealous brethren here who would give the hag her deserts, and duck her, as a witch, in the loch, I pray let them in no way be hindered.'

But the myrmidons of Doctor Lundin showed in this case no alacrity to do his bidding. Hob Anster even ventured to remonstrate in the name of himself and his brethren. 'To be sure he was to do his honour's bidding; and for a' that folk said about the skill and witcheries of Mother Nicneven, he would put his trust in God, and his hand on her collar, without dreadour. But she was no common spae-wife, this Mother Nicneven, like Jean Jopp that lived in the Brierie Baulk. She had lords and lairds that would ruffle for her. There was Moncrieff of Tippermalloch, that was Popish, and the laird of Carslogie, a kend queen's man, were in the fair, with wha kend how mony swords and bucklers at their back; and they would be sure to make a break-out if the officers meddled with the auld Popish witch-wife, who was sae weel friended; mair especially as the laird's best men, such as were not in the castle, were in Edinburgh with him, and he doubted his honour the doctor would find ower few to make a good backing if blades were bare.'

The doctor listened unwillingly to this prudential counsel, and was only comforted by the faithful promise of his satellite that 'The old woman should,' as he expressed it, 'be ta'en canny the next time she trespassed on the bounds.'

'And in that event,' said the doctor to his companion, 'fire and fagot shall be the best of her welcome.'

This he spoke in hearing of the dame herself, who even then, and in passing the doctor, shot towards him from under her grey eyebrows a look of the most insulting and contemptuous superiority.

'This way,' continued the physician — 'this way,' marshalling his guest into his lodging; 'take care you stumble not over a

retort, for it is hazardous for the ignorant to walk in the ways of art.

The page found all reason for the caution; for, besides stuffed birds, and lizards, and snakes bottled up, and bundles of simples made up, and other parcels spread out to dry, and all the confusion, not to mention the mingled and sickening smells, incidental to a druggist's stock-in-trade, he had also to avoid heaps of charcoal, crucibles, bolt-heads, stoves, and the other furniture of a chemical laboratory.

Amongst his other philosophical qualities, Doctor Lundin failed not to be a confused sloven, and his old dame house-keeper, whose life, as she said, was spent in 'redding him up,' had trotted off to the mart of gaiety with other and younger folks. Much clattering and jangling therefore there was among jars, and bottles, and vials, ere the doctor produced the salutiferous potion which he recommended so strongly, and a search equally long and noisy followed among broken cans and cracked pipkins ere he could bring forth a cup out of which to drink it. Both matters being at length achieved, the doctor set the example to his guest, by quaffing off a cup of the cordial, and smacking his lips with approbation as it descended his gullet. Roland, in turn, submitted to swallow the potion which his host so earnestly recommended, but which he found so insufferably bitter that he became eager to escape from the laboratory in search of a draught of fair water to expel the taste. In spite of his efforts, he was nevertheless detained by the garrulity of his host, till he gave him some account of Mother Nicneven.

'I care not to speak of her,' said the doctor, 'in the open air, and among the throng of people: not for fright, like yon cowardly dog, Anster, but because I would give no occasion for a fray, having no leisure to look to stabs, slashes, and broken bones. Men call the old hag a prophetess; I do scarce believe she could foretell when a brood of chickens will chip the shell. Men say she reads the heavens; my black bitch knows as much of them when she sits baying the moon. Men pretend the ancient wretch is a sorceress, a witch, and what not; *inter nos*, I will never contradict a rumour which may bring her to the stake which she so justly deserves, but neither will I believe that the tales of witches which they din into our ears are aught but knavery, cozenage, and old women's fables.'

'In the name of Heaven, what is she then,' said the page, 'that you make such a stir about her?'

'She is one of those cursed old women,' replied the doctor, 'who take currently and impudently upon themselves to act as advisers and curers of the sick, on the strength of some trash of herbs, some rhyme of spells, some julep or diet, drink or cordial.'

'Nay, go no farther,' said the page; 'if they brew cordials, evil be their lot and all their partakers!'

'You say well, young man,' said Doctor Lundin; 'for mine own part, I know no such pests to the commonwealth as these old incarnate devils, who haunt the chambers of the brain-sick patients, that are mad enough to suffer them to interfere with, disturb, and let the regular progress of a learned and artificial cure, with their syrups, and their juleps, and diascordium, and mithridate, and my Lady What-shall-call'um's powder, and worthy Dame Trashem's pill; and thus make widows and orphans, and cheat the regular and well-studied physician, in order to get the name of wise women and skeely neighbours, and so forth. But no more on't. Mother Nieneven¹ and I will meet one day, and she shall know there is danger in dealing with the doctor.'

'It is a true word, and many have found it,' said the page; 'but, under your favour, I would fain walk abroad for a little and see these sports.'

'It is well moved,' said the doctor, 'and I too should be showing myself abroad. Moreover, the play waits us, young man; to-day, *totus mundus agit histrionem*.' And they sallied forth accordingly into the mirthful scene.

¹ See Note 20.

CHAPTER XXVII

See on yon verdant lawn, the gathering crowd
Thickens amain ; the buxom nymphs advance,
Usher'd by jolly clowns ; distinctions cease,
Lost in the common joy, and the bold slave
Leans on his wealthy master unreprieved.

SOMERVILLE, *Rural Sports.*

THE reappearance of the dignified chamberlain on the street of the village was eagerly hailed by the revellers, as a pledge that the play, or dramatic representation, which had been postponed owing to his absence, was now full surely to commence. Anything like an approach to this most interesting of all amusements was of recent origin in Scotland, and engaged public attention in proportion. All other sports were discontinued. The dance around the Maypole was arrested, the ring broken up and dispersed, while the dancers, each leading his partner by the hand, tripped off to the silvan theatre. A truce was in like manner achieved betwixt a huge brown bear and certain mastiffs, who were tugging and pulling at his shaggy coat, under the mediation of the bear-ward and half a dozen butchers and yeomen, who, by dint of 'staving and tailing,' as it was technically termed, separated the unfortunate animals, whose fury had for an hour past been their chief amusement. The itinerant minstrel found himself deserted by the audience he had collected, even in the most interesting passage of the romance which he recited, and just as he was sending about his boy, with bonnet in hand, to collect their oblations. He indignantly stopped short in the midst of *Roseral and Lilian*, and, replacing his three-stringed fiddle, or rebeck, in its leathern case, followed the crowd, with no good-will, to the exhibition which had superseded his own. The juggler had ceased his exertions of emitting flame and smoke, and was content to respire in the manner of ordinary mortals rather than to play gratuitously the part of a fiery dragon. In short, all

other sports were suspended, so eagerly did the revellers throng towards the place of representation.

They would err greatly who should regulate their ideas of this dramatic exhibition upon those derived from a modern theatre; for the rude shows of Thespis were far less different from those exhibited by Euripides on the stage of Athens, with all its magnificent decorations and pomp of dresses and of scenery. In the present case there were no scenes, no stage, no machinery, no pit, box, and gallery, no box-lobby; and, what might in poor Scotland be some consolation for other negations, there was no taking of money at the door. As in the devices of the magnanimous Bottom, the actors had a greensward plot for a stage, and a hawthorn bush for a greenroom and tiring-house; the spectators being accommodated with seats on the artificial bank which had been raised around three-fourths of the playground, the remainder being left open for the entrance and exit of the performers. Here sate the uncritical audience, the chamberlain in the centre, as the person highest in office — all alive to enjoyment and admiration, and all therefore dead to criticism.

The characters which appeared and disappeared before the amused and interested audience were those which fill the earlier stage in all nations — old men, cheated by their wives and daughters, pillaged by their sons, and imposed on by their domestics, a braggadocio captain, a knavish pardoner or quæstionary, a country bumpkin, and a wanton city dame. Amid all these, and more acceptable than almost the whole put together, was the all-licensed fool, the Gracioso of the Spanish drama, who, with his cap fashioned into the resemblance of a coxcomb, and his bauble, a truncheon terminated by a carved figure, wearing a fool's cap, in his hand, went, came, and returned, mingling in every scene of the piece, and interrupting the business, without having any share himself in the action, and ever and anon transferring his gibes from the actors on the stage to the audience who sate around, prompt to applaud the whole.

The wit of the piece, which was not of the most polished kind, was chiefly directed against the superstitious practices of the Catholic religion; and the stage artillery had on this occasion been levelled by no less a person than Doctor Lundin, who had not only commanded the manager of the entertainment to select one of the numerous satires which had been written against the Papists (several of which were cast in a

dramatic form), but had even, like the Prince of Denmark, caused them to insert, or, according to his own phrase, to infuse, here and there, a few pleasantries of his own penning on the same inexhaustible subject, hoping thereby to mollify the rigour of the Lady of Lochleven towards pastimes of this description. He failed not to jog Roland's elbow, who was sitting in state behind him, and recommend to his particular attention those favourite passages. As for the page, to whom the very idea of such an exhibition, simple as it was, was entirely new, he beheld it with the undiminished and ecstatic delight with which men of all ranks look for the first time on dramatic representation, and laughed, shouted, and clapped his hands as the performance proceeded. An incident at length took place which effectually broke off his interest in the business of the scene.

One of the principal personages in the comic part of the drama was, as we have already said, a quæstionary or pardoner, one of those itinerants who hawked about from place to place relics, real or pretended, with which he excited the devotion at once and the charity of the populace, and generally deceived both the one and the other. The hypocrisy, impudence, and profligacy of these clerical wanderers had made them the subject of satire from the time of Chaucer down to that of Heywood. Their present representative failed not to follow the same line of humour, exhibiting pig's bones for relics, and boasting the virtues of small tin crosses, which had been shaken in the holy porringer at Loretto, and of cockle-shells, which had been brought from the shrine of St. James of Compostella, all which he disposed of to the devout Catholics at nearly as high a price as antiquaries are now willing to pay for baubles of similar intrinsic value. At length the pardoner pulled from his scrip a small phial of clear water, of which he vaunted the quality in the following verses : —

‘ Listneth, gode people, everiche one,
For in the londe of Babylone,
Far eastward I wot it lyeth,
And is the first londe the sonne espieth,
Ther, as he cometh fro out the sé ;
In this ilk londe, as thinketh me,
Right as holie legendes tell,
Snottreth from a roke a well,
And falleth into aue bath of ston,
Wher chast Susanne, in times long gon
Was wont to wash her bodie and lim.
Mickle vertue hath that streme,
As ye shall se er that ye pas,

Ensample by this little glas,
Through nightes cold and dayes hote,
Hiderward I have it brought ;
Hath a wife made alip or slide,
Or a maiden stepp'd aside,
Putteth this water under her nose,
Wold she nold she, she shall sneeze.'

The jest, as the reader skilful in the antique language of the drama must at once perceive, turned on the same pivot as in the old minstrel tales of the *Drinking-Horn of King Arthur* and the *Mantle made Amiss*. But the audience were neither learned nor critical enough to challenge its want of originality. The potent relic was, after such grimace and buffoonery as befitted the subject, presented successively to each of the female personages of the drama, not one of whom sustained the supposed test of discretion ; but, to the infinite delight of the audience, sneezed much louder and longer than perhaps they themselves had counted on. The jest seemed at last worn threadbare, and the pardoner was passing on to some new pleasantry, when the jester or clown of the drama, possessing himself secretly of the phial which contained the wondrous liquor, applied it suddenly to the nose of a young woman, who, with her black silk muffler, or screen, drawn over her face, was sitting in the foremost rank of the spectators, intent apparently upon the business of the stage. The contents of the phial, well calculated to sustain the credit of the pardoner's legend, set the damsel a-sneezing violently, an admission of frailty which was received with shouts of rapture by the audience. These were soon, however, renewed at the expense of the jester himself, when the insulted maiden extricated, ere the paroxysm was well over, one hand from the folds of her mantle, and bestowed on the wag a buffet, which made him reel fully his own length from the pardoner, and then acknowledge the favour by instant prostration.

No one pities a jester overcome in his vocation, and the clown met with little sympathy when, rising from the ground and whimpering forth his complaints of harsh treatment, he invoked the assistance and sympathy of the audience. But the chamberlain, feeling his own dignity insulted, ordered two of his halberdiers to bring the culprit before him. When these official persons first approached the virago, she threw herself into an attitude of firm defiance, as if determined to resist their authority ; and from the sample of strength and spirit which

she had already displayed, they showed no alacrity at executing their commission. But on half a minute's reflection, the damsel changed totally her attitude and manner, folded her cloak around her arms in modest and maiden-like fashion, and walked of her own accord to the presence of the great man, followed and guarded by the two manful satellites. As she moved across the vacant space, and more especially as she stood at the footstool of the doctor's judgment-seat, the maiden discovered that lightness and elasticity of step, and natural grace of manner, which combined with female beauty know to be seldom divided from it. Moreover, her neat russet-coloured jacket, and short petticoat of the same colour, displayed a handsome form and a pretty face. Her features were concealed by the screen; but the doctor whose gravity did not prevent his pretensions to be a philosopher, and of which we have hinted at, saw enough to judge her a valuable piece by the sample.

He began, however, with some of the austerity of manner, 'And how now, saucy quondam?' said the medical man of office; 'what have you to say why I should not order you to be ducked in the loch for lifting your hand to the man in my presence?'

'Marry,' replied the culprit, 'because I judge that your honour will not think the cold bath necessary for my complaints.'

'A pestilent jade,' said the doctor, whispering to Roland Græme, 'and I'll warrant her a good one: her voice is as sweet as syrup. But, my pretty maiden,' said he, 'you show us wonderful little of that countenance of yours; be pleased to throw aside your muffler.'

'I trust your honour will excuse me till we are more private,' answered the maiden; 'for I have acquaintance, and I should like ill to be known in the country as the poor girl whom that scurvy knave put his jest upon.'

'Fear nothing for thy good name, my sweet little modicum of candied manna!' replied the doctor; 'for I protest to you as I am chamberlain of Lochleven, Kinross, and so forth, that the chaste Susanna herself could not have snuffed that elixir without sternutation, being in truth a curious distillation of rectified *acetum*, or vinegar of the sun, prepared by mine own hands. Wherefore, as thou sayest thou wilt come to me in private, and express thy contrition for the offence whereof thou hast been guilty, I command that all for the present go forward as if no such interruption of the prescribed course had taken place.'

The damsel courtesied and tripped back to her place. The

play proceeded, but it no longer attracted the attention of Roland Grima.

The voice, the figure, and what the veil permitted to be seen of the neck and tresses, of the village damsel bore so strong a resemblance to those of Catherine Seyton that he felt like one bewildered in the mazes of a changeful and stupifying dream. The memorable scene of the hostelrie rushed on his recollection, with all its doubtful and marvellous circumstances. Were the tales of enchantment which he had read in romances realised in this extraordinary girl? Could she transport herself from the walled and guarded Castle of Lochleven, moated with its broad lake (towards which he cast back a look as if to ascertain it was still in existence), and watched with such scrupulous care as the safety of a nation demanded. Could she surmount all these obstacles, and make such careless and dangerous use of her liberty as to engage herself publicly in a quarrel in a village fair? Roland was unable to determine whether the exertions which it must have cost her to gain her freedom or the use to which she had put it rendered her the most unaccountable creature.

Lost in these meditations, he kept his gaze fixed on the subject of them; and in every casual motion discovered, or thought he discovered, something which reminded him still more strongly of Catherine Seyton. It occurred to him more than once, indeed, that he might be deceiving himself by exaggerating some casual likeness into absolute identity. But then the meeting at the hostelrie of St. Michael's returned to his mind, and it seemed in the highest degree improbable that, under such various circumstances, mere imagination should twice have found opportunity to play him the self-same trick. This time, however, he determined to have his doubts resolved, and for this purpose he sate during the rest of the play like a greyhound in the slip, ready to spring upon the hare the instant that she was started. The damsel, whom he watched attentively lest she should escape in the crowd when the spectacle was closed, sate as if perfectly unconscious that she was observed. But the worthy doctor marked the direction of his eyes, and magnanimously suppressed his own inclination to become the Theseus to this Hippolyta, in deference to the rights of hospitality, which enjoined him to forbear interference with the pleasurable pursuits of his young friend. He passed one or two formal gibes upon the fixed attention which the page paid to the unknown, and upon his own jealousy; adding, how-

ever, that if both were to be presented to the patient at once, he had little doubt she would think the younger man the sounder prescription. 'I fear me,' he added, 'we shall have no news of the knave Auchtermuchty for some time, since the vermin whom I sent after him seem to have proved corbie-messengers. So you have an hour or two on your hands, Master Page; and as the minstrels are beginning to strike up, now that the play is ended, why, an you incline for a dance, yonder is the green, and there sits your partner. I trust you will hold me perfect in my diagnostics, since I see with half an eye what disease you are sick of, and have administered a pleasing remedy.

Discernit sapiens res (as Chambers hath it) quas confundit acellus.'

The page hardly heard the end of the learned adage, or the charge which the chamberlain gave him to be within reach, in case of the wains arriving suddenly, and sooner than expected, so eager was he at once to shake himself free of his learned associate and to satisfy his curiosity regarding the unknown damsel. Yet, in the haste with which he made towards her, he found time to reflect that, in order to secure an opportunity of conversing with her in private, he must not alarm her at first accosting her. He therefore composed his manner and gait, and advancing with becoming self-confidence before three or four country-fellows who were intent on the same design, but knew not so well how to put their request into shape, he acquainted her that he, as the deputy of the venerable chamberlain, requested the honour of her hand as a partner.

'The venerable chamberlain,' said the damsel, frankly, reaching the page her hand, 'does very well to exercise this part of his privilege by deputy; and I suppose the laws of the revels leave me no choice but to accept of his faithful delegate.'

'Provided, fair damsel,' said the page, 'his choice of a delegate is not altogether distasteful to you.'

'Of that, fair sir,' replied the maiden, 'I will tell you more when we have danced the first measure.'

Catherine Seyton had admirable skill in gestic lore, and was sometimes called on to dance for the amusement of her royal mistress. Roland Graeme had often been a spectator of her skill, and sometimes, at the Queen's command, Catherine's partner on such occasions. He was, therefore, perfectly acquainted with Catherine's mode of dancing; and observed that his present partner, in grace, in agility, in quickness of ear, and precision of execution, exactly resembled her, save that the Scottish jig

which he now danced with her required a more violent and rapid motion, and more rustic agility, than the stately pavens, lavoltas, and courantoos which he had seen her execute in the chamber of Queen Mary. The active duties of the dance left him little time for reflection, and none for conversation; but when their *pas de deux* was finished, amidst the acclamations of the villagers, who had seldom witnessed such an exhibition, he took an opportunity, when they yielded up the green to another couple, to use the privilege of a partner, and enter into conversation with the mysterious maiden whom he still held by the hand.

'Fair partner, may I not crave the name of her who has graced me thus far?'

'You may,' said the maiden; 'but it is a question whether I shall answer you.'

'And why?' asked Roland.

'Because nobody gives anything for nothing, and you can tell me nothing in return which I care to hear.'

'Could I not tell you my name and lineage, in exchange for yours?' returned Roland.

'No!' answered the maiden, 'for you know little of either.'

'How?' said the page, somewhat angrily.

'Wrath you not for the matter,' said the damsel; 'I will show you in an instant that I know more of you than you do of yourself.'

'Indeed!' answered Græme; 'for whom then do you take me?'

'For the wild falcon,' answered she, 'whom a dog brought in his mouth to a certain castle, when he was but an unfledged eyas; for the hawk whom men dare not let fly, lest he should check at game and pounce on carrion; whom folk must keep hooded till he has the proper light of his eyes, and can discover good from evil.'

'Well — be it so,' replied Roland Græme; 'I guess at a part of your parable, fair mistress mine; and perhaps I know as much of you as you do of me, and can well dispense with the information which you are so niggard in giving.'

'Prove that,' said the maiden, 'and I will give you credit for more penetration than I judged you to be gifted withal.'

'It shall be proved instantly,' said Roland Græme. 'The first letter of your name is S and the last N.'

'Admirable!' said his partner; 'guess on.'

'It pleases you to-day,' continued Roland, 'to wear the snood and kirtle, and perhaps you may be seen to-morrow in hat and feather, hose and doublet.'

'In the clout! — in the clout! you have hit the very white,' said the damsel, suppressing a great inclination to laugh.

'You can switch men's eyes out of their heads, as well as the heart out of their bosoms.'

These last words were uttered in a low and tender tone, which, to Roland's great mortification, and somewhat to his displeasure, was so far from allaying, that it greatly increased, his partner's disposition to laughter. She could scarce compose herself while she replied, 'If you had thought my hand so formidable,' extricating it from his hold, 'you would not have grasped it so hard; but I perceive you know me so fully that there is no occasion to show you my face.'

'Fair Catherine,' said the page, 'he were unworthy ever to have seen you, far less to have dwelt so long in the same service, and under the same roof with you, who could mistake your air, your gesture, your step in walking or in dancing, the turn of your neck, the symmetry of your form: none could be so dull as not to recognise you by so many proofs; but for me, I could swear even to that tress of hair that escapes from under your muffler.'

'And to the face, of course, which that muffler covers,' said the maiden, removing her veil, and in an instant endeavouring to replace it. She showed the features of Catherine; but an unusual degree of petulant impatience inflamed them when, from some awkwardness in her management of the muffler, she was unable again to adjust it with that dexterity which was a principal accomplishment of the coquettes of the time.

'The fiend rive the rag to tatters!' said the damsel, as the veil fluttered about her shoulders, with an accent so earnest and decided that it made the page start. He looked again at the damsel's face, but the information which his eyes received was to the same purport as before. He assisted her to adjust her muffler, and both were for an instant silent. The damsel spoke first, for Roland Græme was overwhelmed with surprise at the contrarieties which Catherine Seyton seemed to include in her person and character.

'You are surprised,' said the damsel to him, 'at what you see and hear. But the times which make females men are least of all fitted for men to become women; yet you yourself are in danger of such a change.'

'I in danger of becoming effeminate!' said the page.

'Yes, you, for all the boldness of your reply,' said the damsel. 'When you should hold fast your religion, because it is assailed

on all sides by rebels, traitors, and heretics, you let it glide out of your breast like water grasped in the hand. If you are driven from the faith of your fathers from fear of a traitor, is not that womanish? If you are cajoled by the cunning arguments of a trumpeter of heresy, or the praises of a Puritanic old woman, is not that womanish? If you are bribed by the hope of spoil and preferment, is not that womanish? And when you wonder at my venting a threat or an execration, should you not wonder at yourself, who, pretending to a gentle name, and aspiring to knighthood, can be at the same time cowardly, silly, and self-interested?

'I would that a man would bring such a charge!' said the page; 'he should see, ere his life was a minute older, whether he had cause to term me coward or no.'

'Beware of such big words,' answered the maiden; 'you said but anon that I sometimes wear hose and doublet.'

'But remain still Catherine Seyton, wear what you list,' said the page, endeavouring again to possess himself of her hand.

'You indeed are pleased to call me so,' replied the maiden, evading his intention, 'but I have many other names besides.'

'And will you not reply to that,' said the page, 'by which you are distinguished beyond every other maiden in Scotland?'

The damsel, unallured by his praises, still kept aloof, and sung with gaiety a verse from an old ballad —

'O some do call me Jack, sweet love,
And some do call me Gill;
But when I ride to Holyrood,
My name is Wilful Will.'

'Wilful Will!' exclaimed the page, impatiently; 'say rather Will o' the Wisp — Jack with the Lantern, for never was such a deceitful or wandering meteor!'

'If I be such,' replied the maiden, 'I ask no fools to follow me. If they do so, it is at their own pleasure, and must be on their own proper peril.'

'Nay, but, dearest Catherine,' said Roland Græme, 'be for one instant serious.'

'If you will call me your dearest Catherine, when I have given you so many names to choose upon,' replied the damsel, 'I would ask you how, supposing me for two or three hours of my life escaped from yonder tower, you have the cruelty to ask me to be serious during the only merry moments I have seen perhaps for months?'

'Ay, but, fair Catherine, there are moments of deep and true feeling which are worth ten thousand years of the liveliest mirth; and such was that of yesterday, when you so nearly——'

'So nearly what?' demanded the damsel, hastily.

'When you approached your lips so near to the sign you had traced on my forehead.'

'Mother of Heaven!' exclaimed she, in a yet fiercer tone, and with a more masculine manner than she had yet exhibited.

'Catherine Seyton approach her lips to a man's brow, and thou that man! Vassal, thou liest!'

The page stood astonished; but, conceiving he had alarmed the damsel's delicacy by alluding to the enthusiasm of a moment, and the manner in which she had expressed it, he endeavoured to falter forth an apology. His excuses, though he was unable to give them any regular shape, were accepted by his companion, who had indeed suppressed her indignation after its first explosion. 'Speak no more on't,' she said. 'And now let us part; our conversation may attract more notice than is convenient for either of us.'

'Nay, but allow me at least to follow you to some sequestered place.'

'You dare not,' replied the maiden.

'How,' said the youth, 'dare not? where is it you dare go, where I dare not follow?'

'You fear a will o' the wisp,' said the damsel; 'how would you face a fiery dragon, with an enchantress mounted on its back?'

'Like Sir Eger, Sir Grime, or Sir Greysteil,' said the page; 'but be there such toys to be seen here?'

'I go to Mother Nicneven's,' answered the maid; 'and she is witch enough to rein the horned devil, with a red silk thread for a bridle, and a rowan-tree switch for a whip.'

'I will follow you,' said the page.

'Let it be at some distance,' said the maiden.

And wrapping her mantle round her with more success than on her former attempt, she mingled with the throng, and walked towards the village, heedfully followed by Roland Grame at some distance, and under every precaution which he could use to prevent his purpose from being observed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Yes, it is she whose eyes look'd on thy childhood,
And watch'd with trembling hope thy dawn of youth,
That now, with these same eyeballs dimm'd with age,
And dimmer yet with tears, sees thy dishonour.

Old Play.

AT the entrance of the principal, or indeed, so to speak, the only, street in Kinross the damsel, whose steps were pursued by Roland Græme, cast a glance behind her, as if to be certain he had not lost trace of her, and then plunged down a very narrow lane which ran betwixt two rows of poor and ruinous cottages. She paused for a second at the door of one of those miserable tenements, again cast her eye up the lane towards Roland, then lifted the latch, opened the door, and disappeared from his view.

With whatever haste the page followed her example, the difficulty which he found in discovering the trick of the latch, which did not work quite in the usual manner, and in pushing open the door, which did not yield to his first effort, delayed for a minute or two his entrance into the cottage. A dark and smoky passage led, as usual, betwixt the exterior wall of the house and the 'hallan,' or clay wall, which served as a partition betwixt it and the interior. At the end of this passage, and through the partition, was a door leading into the 'ben,' or inner chamber of the cottage, and when Roland Græme's hand was upon the latch of this door, a female voice pronounced, '*Benedictus qui veniat in nomine Domini, damnandus qui in nomine inimici.*' On entering the apartment, he perceived the figure which the chamberlain had pointed out to him as Mother Nieven, seated beside the lowly hearth. But there was no other person in the room. Roland Græme gazed around in surprise at the disappearance of Catherine Seyton, without paying much regard to the supposed sorceress, until she attracted and riveted his regard by the tone in which she asked him — 'What seekest thou here?'

'I seek,' said the page, with much embarrassment — 'I seek —'

But his answer was cut short when the old woman, drawing her huge grey eyebrows sternly together, with a frown which knitted her brow into a thousand wrinkles, arose, and erecting herself up to her full natural size, tore the kerchief from her head, and seizing Roland by the arm, made two strides across the floor of the apartment to a small window through which the light fell full on her face, and showed the astonished youth the countenance of Magdalen Græme. 'Yea, Roland,' she said, 'thine eyes deceive thee not : they show thee truly the features of her whom thou hast thyself deceived, whose wine thou hast turned into gall, her bread of joyfulness into bitter poison, her hope into the blackest despair. It is she who now demands of thee, what seekest thou here ? — she whose heaviest sin towards Heaven hath been, that she loved thee even better than the weal of the whole church, and could not without reluctance surrender thee even in the cause of God — she now asks you, what seekest thou here ?'

While she spoke, she kept her broad black eye riveted on the youth's face, with the expression with which the eagle regards his prey ere he tears it to pieces. Roland felt himself at the moment incapable either of reply or evasion. This extraordinary enthusiast had preserved over him in some measure the ascendancy which she had acquired during his childhood ; and besides, he knew the violence of her passions and her impatience of contradiction, and was sensible that almost any reply which he could make was likely to throw her into an ecstasy of rage. He was therefore silent ; and Magdalen Græme proceeded with increasing enthusiasm in her apostrophe — 'Once more, what seek'st thou, false boy ? — seek'st thou the honour thou hast renounced, the faith thou hast abandoned, the hopes thou hast destroyed ? Or didst thou seek me, the sole protectress of thy youth, the only parent whom thou hast known, that thou mayest trample on my grey hairs, even as thou hast already trampled on the best wishes of my heart ?'

'Pardon me, mother,' said Roland Græme ; 'but, in truth and reason, I deserve not your blame. I have been treated amongst you — even by yourself, my revered parent, as well as by others — as one who lacked the common attributes of free-will and human reason, or was at least deemed unfit to exercise them. A land of enchantment have I been led into, and spells have been cast around me — every one has met me in disguise —'

every one has spoken to me in parables — I have been like one who walks in a weary and bewildering dream ; and now you blame me that I have not the sense, and judgment, and steadiness of a waking, and a disenchanted, and a reasonable man, who knows what he is doing, and wherefore he does it ! If one must walk with masks and spectres, who waft themselves from place to place as it were in vision rather than reality, it might shake the soundest faith and turn the wisest head. I sought, since I must needs avow my folly, the same Catherine Seyton with whom you made me first acquainted, and whom I most strangely find in this village of Kinross, gayest among the revellers, when I had but just left her in the well-guarded Castle of Lochleven, the sad attendant of an imprisoned Queen. I sought her, and in her place I find you, my mother, more strangely disguised than even she is.'

'And what hadst thou to do with Catherine Seyton ?' said the matron, sternly ; 'is this a time or a world to follow maidens, or to dance around a Maypole ? When the trumpet summons every true-hearted Scotsman around the standard of the true sovereign, shalt thou be found loitering in a lady's bower ?'

'No, by Heaven, nor imprisoned in the rugged walls of an island castle !' answered Roland Græme. 'I would the blast were to sound even now, for I fear that nothing less loud will dispel the chimerical visions by which I am surrounded.'

'Doubt not that it will be winded,' said the matron, 'and that so fearfully loud, that Scotland will never hear the like until the last and loudest blast of all shall announce to mountain and to valley that time is no more. Meanwhile, be thou but brave and constant. Serve God, and honour thy sovereign. Abide by thy religion. I cannot — I will not — I dare not ask thee the truth of the terrible surmises I have heard touching thy falling away — perfect not that accursed sacrifice ; and yet, even at this late hour, thou mayest be what I have hoped for, the son of my dearest hope. What say I ? The son of *my* hope ? Thou shalt be the hope of Scotland, her boast and her honour ! Even thy wildest and most foolish wishes may perchance be fulfilled. I might blush to mingle meaner motives with the noble guerdon I hold out to thee. It shames me, being such as I am, to mention the idle passions of youth, save with contempt and the purpose of censure. But we must bribe children to wholesome medicine by the offer of cates, and youth to honourable achievement with the promise of pleasure. Mark me, therefore, Roland. The love of Catherine Seyton

will follow him only who shall achieve the freedom of her mistress ; and believe, it may be one day in thine own power to be that happy lover. Cast, therefore, away doubt and fear, and prepare to do what religion calls for, what thy country demands of thee, what thy duty as a subject and as a servant alike require at your hand ; and be assured, even the idlest or wildest wishes of thy heart will be most readily attained by following the call of thy duty.'

As she ceased speaking, a double knock was heard against the inner door. The matron, hastily adjusting her muffler and resuming her chair by the hearth, demanded who was there.

'*Salve in nomine sancto,*' was answered from without.

'*Salvete et vos,*' answered Magdalen Græme.

And a man entered in the ordinary dress of a nobleman's retainer, wearing at his girdle a sword and buckler. 'I sought you,' said he, 'my mother, and him whom I see with you.' Then addressing himself to Roland Græme, he said to him, 'Hast thou not a packet from George Douglas ?'

'I have,' said the page, suddenly recollecting that which had been committed to his charge in the morning, 'but I may not deliver it to any one without some token that they have a right to ask it.'

'You say well,' replied the serving-man, and whispered into his ear, 'The packet which I ask is the report to his father, will this token suffice ?'

'It will,' replied the page, and taking the packet from his bosom, gave it to the man.

'I will return presently,' said the serving-man, and left the cottage.

Roland had now sufficiently recovered his surprise to accost his relative in turn, and request to know the reason why he found her in so precarious a disguise, and a place so dangerous. 'You cannot be ignorant,' he said, 'of the hatred that the Lady of Lochleven bears to those of your — that is of our religion ; your present disguise lays you open to suspicions of a different kind, but inferring no less hazard ; and whether as a Catholic, or as a sorceress, or as a friend to the unfortunate Queen, you are in equal danger, if apprehended within the bounds of the Douglas ; and in the chamberlain who administers their authority you have, for his own reasons, an enemy, and a bitter one.'

'I know it,' said the matron, her eyes kindling with triumph ;

'I know that, vain of his schoolcraft and carnal wisdom, Luke Lurdin views with jealousy and hatred the blessings which the saints have conferred on my prayers, and on the holy relics, before the touch, nay, before the bare presence, of which disease and death have so often been known to retreat. I know he would rend and tear me ; but their is a chain and a muzzle on the ban-dog that shall restrain his fury, and the Master's servant shall not be offended by him until the Master's work is wrought. When that hour comes, let the shadows of the evening descend on me in thunder and in tempest : the time shall be welcome that relieves my eyes from seeing guilt, and my ears from listening to blasphemy. Do thou but be constant ; play thy part as I have played and will play mine ; and my release shall be like that of a blessed martyr whose ascent to Heaven angels hail with psalm and song, while earth pursues him with hiss and with execration.'

As she concluded, the serving-man again entered the cottage, and said, 'All is well ! the time holds for to-morrow night.'

'What time ? what holds ?' exclaimed Roland Græme. 'I trust I have given the Douglas's packet to no wrong —'

'Content yourself, young man,' answered the serving-man ; 'thou hast my word and token.'

'I know not if the token be right,' said the page ; 'and I care not much for the word of a stranger.'

'What,' said the matron, 'although thou mayest have given a packet delivered to thy charge by one of the Queen's rebels into the hand of a loyal subject — there were no great mistake in that, thou hot-brained boy !'

'By St. Andrew, there were foul mistake, though,' answered the page ; 'it is the very spirit of my duty, in this first stage of chivalry, to be faithful to my trust ; and had the devil given me a message to discharge, I would not — so I had plighted my faith to the contrary — betray his counsel to an angel of light.'

'Now, by the love I once bore thee,' said the matron, 'I could slay thee with mine own hand, when I hear thee talk of a dearer faith being due to rebels and heretics than thou oweest to thy church and thy prince !'

'Be patient, my good sister,' said the serving-man ; 'I will give him such reasons as shall counterbalance the scruples which beset him : the spirit is honourable, though now it may be mistimed and misplaced. Follow me, young man.'

'Ere I go to call this stranger to a reckoning,' said the page

to the matron, 'is there nothing I can do for your comfort and safety?'

'Nothing,' she replied — 'nothing, save what will lead more to thine own honour; the saints who have protected me thus far will lend me succour as I need it. Tread the path of glory that is before thee, and only think of me as the creature on earth who will be most delighted to hear of thy fame. Follow the stranger; he hath tidings for you that you little expect.'

The stranger remained on the threshold as if waiting for Roland, and as soon as he saw him put himself in motion he moved on before at a quick pace. Diving still deeper down the lane, Roland perceived that it was now bordered by buildings upon the one side only, and that the other was fenced by a high old wall, over which some trees extended their branches. Descending a good way farther, they came to a small door in the wall. Roland's guide paused, looked around for an instant to see if any one were within sight, then taking a key from his pocket, opened the door and entered, making a sign to Roland Græme to follow him. He did so, and the stranger locked the door carefully on the inside. During this operation the page had a moment to look around, and perceived that he was in a small orchard very trimly kept.

The stranger led him through an alley or two, shaded by trees loaded with summer-fruit, into a pleached arbour, where, taking the turf-seat which was on the one side, he motioned to Roland to occupy that which was opposite to him, and, after a momentary silence, opened the conversation as follows: 'You have asked a better warrant than the word of a mere stranger to satisfy you that I have the authority of George of Douglas for possessing myself of the packet entrusted to your charge?'

'It is precisely the point on which I demand reckoning of you,' said Roland. 'I fear I have acted hastily; if so, I must redeem my error as I best may.'

'You hold me then as a perfect stranger?' said the man. 'Look at my face more attentively, and see if the features do not resemble those of a man much known to you formerly.'

Roland gazed attentively; but the ideas recalled to his mind were so inconsistent with the mean and servile dress of the person before him that he did not venture to express the opinion which he was irresistibly induced to form.

'Yes, my son,' said the stranger, observing his embarrassment, 'you do indeed see before you the unfortunate Father Ambrosius, who once accounted his ministry crowned in your

preservation from the snares of heresy, but who is now condemned to lament thee as a castaway!

Roland Gruemo's kindness of heart was at least equal to his vivacity of temper: he could not bear to see his ancient and honoured master and spiritual guide in a situation which inferred a change of fortune so melancholy, but, throwing himself at his feet, grasped his knees and wept aloud.

'What mean these tears, my son?' said the abbot; 'if they are shed for your own sins and follies, surely they are gracious showers, and may avail thee much; but weep not, if they fall on my account. You indeed see the superior of the community of St. Mary's in the dress of a poor sworder, who gives his master the use of his blade and buckler, and, if needful, of his life, for a coarse livery coat, and four marks by the year. But such a garb suits the time, and, in the period of the church militant, as well becomes her prelates as staff, mitre, and crosier in the days of the church's triumph.'

'By what fate,' said the page — 'and yet why,' added he, checking himself, 'need I ask? Catherine Seyton in some sort prepared me for this. But that the change should be so absolute, the destruction so complete!'

'Yes, my son,' said the Abbot Ambrosius, 'thine own eyes beheld, in my unworthy elevation to the abbot's stall, the last especial act of holy solemnity which shall be seen in the church of St. Mary's, until it shall please Heaven to turn back the captivity of the church. For the present, the shepherd is smitten — ay, wellnigh to the earth, the flocks are scattered, and the shrines of saints and martyrs, and pious benefactors to the church, are given to the owls of night and the satyrs of the desert.'

'And your brother, the Knight of Avenel — could he do nothing for your protection?'

'He himself hath fallen under the suspicion of the ruling powers,' said the abbot, 'who are as unjust to their friends as they are cruel to their enemies. I could not grieve at it, did I hope it might estrange him from his cause; but I know the soul of Halbert, and I rather fear it will drive him to prove his fidelity to their unhappy cause by some deed which may be yet more destructive to the church, and more offensive to Heaven. Enough of this; and now to the business of our meeting. I trust you will hold it sufficient if I pass my word to you, that the packet of which you were lately the bearer was designed for my hands by George of Douglas?'

'Then,' said the page, 'is George of Douglas——'

'A true friend to his Queen, Roland; and will soon, I trust, have his eyes opened to the errors of his — miscalled — church.'

'But what is he to his father, and what to the Lady of Lochleven, who has been as a mother to him?' said the page, impatiently.

'The best friend to both, in time and through eternity,' said the abbot, 'if he shall prove the happy instrument for redeeming the evil they have wrought, and are still working.'

'Still,' said the page, 'I like not that good service which begins in breach of trust.'

'I blame not thy scruples, my son,' said the abbot; 'but the time which has wrenched asunder the allegiance of Christians to the church, and of subjects to their king, has dissolved all the lesser bonds of society; and, in such days, mere human ties must no more restrain our progress than the brambles and briers, which catch hold of his garments, should delay the path of a pilgrim who travels to pay his vows.'

'But, my father——' said the youth, and then stopt short in a hesitating manner.

'Speak on, my son,' said the abbot — 'speak without fear.'

'Let me not offend you, then,' said Roland, 'when I say, that it is even this which our adversaries charge against us, when they say that, shaping the means according to the end, we are willing to commit great moral evil in order that we may work out eventual good.'

'The heretics have played their usual arts on you, my son,' said the abbot; 'they would willingly deprive us of the power of acting wisely and secretly, though their possession of superior force forbids our contending with them on the terms of equality. They have reduced us to a state of exhausted weakness, and now would fain proscribe the means by which weakness, through all the range of nature, supplies the lack of strength, and defends itself against its potent enemies. As well might the hound say to the hare, "Use not these wily turns to escape me, but contend with me in pitched battle," as the armed and powerful heretic demand of the down-trodden and oppressed Catholic to lay aside the wisdom of the serpent, by which alone they may again hope to raise up the Jerusalem over which they weep, and which it is their duty to rebuild. But more of this hereafter. And now, my son, I command thee on thy faith to tell me truly and particularly what has chanced to thee since we parted, and what is the present state of thy conscience. Thy relation, our

sister Magdalen, is a woman of excellent gifts, blessed with a zeal which neither doubt nor danger can quench ; but yet it is not a zeal altogether according to knowledge ; wherefore, my son, I would willingly be myself thy interrogator and thy counsellor in these days of darkness and stratagem.'

With the respect which he owed to his first instructor, Roland Grame went rapidly through the events which the reader is acquainted with ; and while he disguised not from the prelate the impression which had been made on his mind by the arguments of the preacher Henderson, he accidentally, and almost involuntarily, gave his father confessor to understand the influence which Catherine Seyton had acquired over his mind.

'It is with joy I discover, my dearest son,' replied the abbot, 'that I have arrived in time to arrest thee on the verge of the precipice to which thou wert approaching. These doubts of which you complain are the weeds which naturally grow up in a strong soil, and require the careful hand of the husbandman to eradicate them. Thou must study a little volume, which I will impart to thee in fitting time, in which, by Our Lady's grace, I have placed in somewhat a clearer light than heretofore the points debated betwixt us and these heretics, who sow among the wheat the same tares which were formerly privily mingled with the good seed by the Albigenses and the Lollards. But it is not by reason alone that you must hope to conquer these insinuations of the enemy. It is sometimes by timely resistance, but oftener by timely flight. You must shut your ears against the arguments of the heresiarch, when circumstances permit you not to withdraw the foot from his company. Anchor your thoughts upon the service of Our Lady, while he is expending in vain his heretical sophistry. Are you unable to maintain your attention on Heavenly objects, think rather on thine own earthly pleasures than tempt Providence and the saints by giving an attentive ear to the erring doctrine : think of thy hawk, thy hound, thine angling-rod, thy sword and buckler — think even of Catherine Seyton, rather than give thy soul to the lessons of the tempter. Alas ! my son, believe not that, worn out with woes, and bent more by affliction than by years, I have forgotten the effect of beauty over the heart of youth. Even in the watches of the night, broken by thoughts of an imprisoned queen, a distracted kingdom, a church laid waste and ruinous, come other thoughts than these suggest, and feelings which belonged to an earlier and happier course of life. Be it so — we must bear our load as we may ; and not in

vain are these passions implanted in our breast, since, as now in thy case, they may come in aid of resolutions founded upon higher grounds. Yet beware, my son -- this Catherine Seyton is the daughter of one of Scotland's proudest, as well as most worthy barons; and thy state may not suffer thee, as yet, to aspire so high. But thus it is -- Heaven works its purposes through human folly; and Douglas's ambitious affection as well as thine shall contribute alike to the desired end.'

'How, my father,' said the page, 'my suspicions are then true! Douglas loves --'

'He does; and with a love as much misplaced as thine own; but beware of him -- cross him not -- thwart him not.'

'Let him not cross or thwart me,' said the page; 'for I will not yield him an inch of way, had he in his body the soul of every Douglas that has lived since the time of the Dark Grey Man.'¹

'Nay, have patience, idle boy, and reflect that your suit can never interfere with his. But a truce with these vanities, and let us better employ the little space which still remains to us to spend together. To thy knees, my son, and resume the long-interrupted duty of confession, that, happen what may, the hour may find in thee a faithful Catholic, relieved from the guilt of his sins by authority of the Holy Church. Could I but tell thee, Roland, the joy with which I see thee once more put thy knee to its best and fittest use! *Quid dicis, mi fili?*'

'*Culpas meas,*' answered the youth; and, according to the ritual of the Catholic Church, he confessed and received absolution, to which was annexed the condition of performing certain enjoined penances.

When this religious ceremony was ended, an old man, in the dress of a peasant of the better order, approached the arbour and greeted the abbot. 'I have waited the conclusion of your devotions,' he said, 'to tell you the youth is sought after by the chamberlain, and it were well he should appear without delay. Holy St. Francis, if the halberdiers were to seek him here, they might sorely wrong my garden-plot: they are in office, and reck not where they tread, were each step on jessamine and clove-gillyflowers.'

'We will speed him forth, my brother,' said the abbot; 'but, alas! is it possible that such trifles should live in your mind at a crisis so awful as that which is now impending?'

'Reverend father,' answered the proprietor of the garden, for

¹ See Note 21.

such he was, 'how oft shall I pray you to keep your high counsel for high minds like your own? What have you required of me, that I have not granted unresistingly, though with an aching heart?'

'I would require of you to be yourself, my brother,' said the Abbot Ambrosius: 'to remember what you were, and to what your early vows have bound you.'

'I tell thee, Father Ambrosius,' replied the gardener, 'the patience of the best saint that ever said paternoster would be exhausted by the trials to which you have put mine. What I have been, it skills not to speak at present: no one knows better than yourself, father, what I renounced, in hopes to find ease and quiet during the remainder of my days; and no one better knows how my retreat has been invaded, my fruit-trees broken, my flower-beds trodden down, my quiet frightened away, and my very sleep driven from my bed, since ever this poor Queen, God bless her! hath been sent to Lochleven. I blame her not: being a prisoner, it is natural she should wish to get out from so vile a hold, where there is scarcely any place even for a tolerable garden, and where the water-mists, as I am told, blight all the early blossoms — I say, I cannot blame her for endeavouring for her freedom; but why I should be drawn into the scheme; why my harmless arbours, that I planted with my own hands, should become places of privy conspiracy; why my little quay, which I built for my own fishing-boat, should have become a haven for secret embarkations; in short, why I should be dragged into matters where both heading and hanging are like to be the issue, I profess to you, reverend father, I am totally ignorant.'

'My brother,' answered the abbot, 'you are wise, and ought to know —'

'I am not — I am not — I am not wise,' replied the horticulturist, pettishly, and stopping his ears with his fingers; 'I was never called wise, but when men wanted to engage me in some action of notorious folly.'

'But, my good brother,' said the abbot —

'I am not good, neither,' said the peevish gardener — 'I am neither good nor wise. Had I been wise, you would not have been admitted here; and were I good, methinks I should send you elsewhere to hatch plots for destroying the quiet of the country. What signifies disputing about queen or king, when men may sit at peace *sub umbra vitis sui*? And so would I do, after the precept of Holy Writ, were I, as you term me, wise or

good. But such as I am, my neck is in the yoke, and you make me draw what weight you list. Follow me, youngster. This reverend father, who makes in his jack-man's dress nearly as reverend a figure as I myself, will agree with me in one thing at least, and that is, that you have been long enough here.

'Follow the good father, Roland,' said the abbot, 'and remember my words—a day is approaching that will try the temper of all true Scotsmen; may thy heart prove faithful as the steel of thy blade!'

The page bowed in silence, and they parted; the gardener, notwithstanding his advanced age, walking on before him very briskly, and muttering as he went, partly to himself, partly to his companion, after the manner of old men of weakened intellects. 'When I was great,' thus ran his maundering, 'and had my mule and my ambling palfrey at command, I warrant you I could have as well flown through the air as have walked at this pace. I had my gout and my rheumatics, and an hundred things besides, that hung fetters on my heels; and now, thanks to Our Lady and honest labour, I can walk with any good man of my age in the kingdom of Fife. Fy upon it, that experience should be so long in coming!'

As he was thus muttering, his eye fell upon the branch of a pear-tree which drooped down for want of support, and at once forgetting his haste, the old man stopped and set seriously about binding it up. Roland Græme had both readiness, neatness of hand, and good-nature in abundance: he immediately lent his aid, and in a minute or two the bough was supported, and tied up in a way perfectly satisfactory to the old man, who looked at it with great complaisance. 'They are bergamots,' he said, 'and if you will come ashore in autumn, you shall taste of them; the like are not in Lochleven Castle. The garden there is a poor pinfold, and the gardener, Hugh Houkham, hath little skill of his craft; so come ashore, Master Page, in autumn, when you would eat pears. But what am I thinking of! ere that time come, they may have given thee sour pears for plums. Take an old man's advice, youth, one who hath seen many days, and sat in higher places than thou canst hope for: bend thy sword into a pruning-hook, and make a dibble of thy dagger—thy days shall be the longer, and thy health the better for it—and come to aid me in my garden, and I will teach thee the real French fashion of "imping," which the Southron call grafting. Do this, and do it without loss of

time, for there is a whirlwind coming over the land, and only those shall escape who lie too much beneath the storm to have their boughs broken by it.'

So saying, he dismissed Roland Græme through a different door from that by which he had entered, signed a cross and pronounced a *benedicite* as they parted, and then, still muttering to himself, retired into the garden, and locked the door on the inside.

CHAPTER XXIX

Pray God she prove not masculine ere long !

King Henry VI.

DISMISSED from the old man's garden, Roland Græme found that a grassy paddock, in which sauntered two cows, the property of the gardener, still separated him from the village. He paced through it, lost in meditation upon the words of the abbot. Father Ambrosius had, with success enough, exerted over him that powerful influence which the guardians and instructors of our childhood possess over our more mature youth. And yet, when Roland looked back upon what the father had said, he could not but suspect that he had rather sought to evade entering into the controversy betwixt the churches than to repel the objections and satisfy the doubts which the lectures of Henderson had excited. 'For this he had no time,' said the page to himself, 'neither have I now calmness and learning sufficient to judge upon points of such magnitude. Besides, it were base to quit my faith while the wind of fortune sets against it, unless I were so placed that my conversion, should it take place, were free as light from the imputation of self-interest. I was bred a Catholic — bred in the faith of Bruce and Wallace — I will hold that faith till time and reason shall convince me that it errs. I will serve this poor Queen as a subject should serve an imprisoned and wronged sovereign. They who placed me in her service have to blame themselves : they sent me hither, a gentleman trained in the paths of loyalty and honour, when they should have sought out some truckling, cogging, double-dealing knave, who would have been at once the observant page of the Queen and the obsequious spy of her enemies. Since I must choose betwixt aiding and betraying her, I will decide as becomes her servant and her subject ; but Catherine Seyton — Catherine Seyton, beloved by Douglas, and holding me on or off as the intervals of her leisure or caprice will permit — how shall I deal with the

coquette! By Heaven, when I next have an opportunity, she shall render me some reason for her conduct, or I will break with her forever!

As he formed this doughty resolution, he crossed the stile which led out of the little inclosure, and was almost immediately greeted by Dr. Luke Lundin.

'Ha! my most excellent young friend,' said the doctor, 'from whence come you? — but I note the place. Yes, neighbour Blinkhoolie's garden is a pleasant rendezvous, and you are of the age when lads look after a bonny lass with one eye and a dainty plum with another. But hey! you look subtriste and melancholic: I fear the maiden has proved cruel, or the plums unripe; and surely, I think neighbour Blinkhoolie's damsons can scarcely have been well preserved throughout the winter — he spares the saccharine juice on his confections. But courage, man, there are more Kates in Kinross; and for the immature fruit, a glass of my double distilled *aqua mirabilis*! *probatum est*.'

The page darted an ireful glance at the facetious physician; but presently recollecting that the name 'Kate,' which had provoked his displeasure, was probably but introduced for the sake of alliteration, he suppressed his wrath, and only asked if the wains had been heard of.

'Why, I have been seeking for you this hour, to tell you that the stuff is in your boat, and that the boat waits your pleasure. Auchtermuchty had only fallen into company with an idle knave like himself, and a stoup of aquavite between them. Your boatmen lie on their oars, and there have already been made two wefts from the warder's turret, to intimate that those in the castle are impatient for your return. Yet there is time for you to take a slight repast; and, as your friend and physician, I hold it unfit you should face the water-breeze with an empty stomach.'

Roland Græme had nothing for it but to return, with such cheer as he might, to the place where his boat was moored on the beach, and resisted all offer of refreshment, although the doctor promised that he should prelude the collation with a ge: 'le appetiser — a decoction of herbs, gathered and distilled by himself. Indeed, as Roland had not forgotten the contents of his morning cup, it is possible that the recollection induced him to stand firm in his refusal of all food to which such an unpalatable preface was the preliminary. As they passed towards the boat (for the ceremonious politeness of the worthy

chamberlain would not permit the page to go thither without attendance), Roland Grème, amidst a group who seemed to be assembled around a party of wandering musicians, distinguished, as he thought, the dress of Catherine Seyton. He shook himself clear from his attendant, and at one spring was in the midst of the crowd and at the side of the damsel. 'Catherine,' he whispered, 'is it well for you to be still here?—will you not return to the castle?'

'To the devil with your Catherines and your castles!' answered the maiden, snappishly; 'have you not had time enough already to get rid of your follies? Begone! I desire not your farther company, and there will be danger in thrusting it upon me.'

'Nay, but if there be danger, fairest Catherine,' replied Roland, 'why will you not allow me to stay and share it with you?'

'Intruding fool,' said the maiden, 'the danger is all on thine own side: the risk is, in plain terms, that I strike thee on the mouth with the hilt of my dagger.' So saying, she turned haughtily from him, and moved through the crowd, who gave way in some astonishment at the masculine activity with which she forced her way among them.

As Roland, though much irritated, prepared to follow, he was grappled on the other side by Dr. Luke Lundin, who reminded him of the loaded boat, of the two wefts, or signals with the flag, which had been made from the tower, of the danger of the cold breeze to an empty stomach, and of the vanity of spending more time upon coy wenches and sour plums. Roland was thus, in a manner, dragged back to his boat, and obliged to launch her forth upon his return to Lochleven Castle.

That little voyage was speedily accomplished, and the page was greeted at the landing-place by the severe and caustic welcome of old Dryfesdale. 'So, young gallant, you are come at last, after a delay of six hours, and after two signals from the castle? But, I warrant, some idle junketing had occupied you too deeply to think of your service or your duty. Where is the note of the plate and household stuff? Pray Heaven it hath not been diminished under the sleeveless care of so young a gadabout!'

'Diminished under my care, sir steward?' retorted the page, angrily; 'say so in earnest, and by Heaven your grey hair shall hardly protect your saucy tongue!'

'A truce with your swaggering, young esquire,' returned the steward; 'we have bolts and dungeons for brawlers. Go to my lady and swagger before her, if thou darest; she will give thee proper cause of offence, for she has waited for thee long and impatiently.'

'And where then is the Lady of Lochleven?' said the page; 'for I conceive it is of her thou speakest.'

'Ay, of whom else?' replied Dryfesdale; 'or who besides the Lady of Lochleven hath a right to command in this castle!'

'The Lady of Lochleven is thy mistress,' said Roland Græme; 'but mine is the Queen of Scotland.'

The steward looked at him fixedly for a moment, with an air in which suspicion and dislike were ill concealed by an affectation of contempt. 'The bragging cock-chicken,' he said, 'will betray himself by his rash crowing. I have marked thy altered manner in the chapel of late — ay, and your changing of glances at meal-time with a certain idle damsel, who, like thyself, laughs at all gravity and goodness. There is something about you, my master, which should be looked to. But, if you would know whether the Lady of Lochleven or that other lady hath a right to command thy service, thou wilt find them together in the Lady Mary's ante-room.'

Roland hastened thither, not unwilling to escape from the ill-natured penetration of the old man, and marvelling at the same time what peculiarity could have occasioned the Lady of Lochleven's being in the Queen's apartment at this time of the afternoon, so much contrary to her usual wont. His acuteness instantly penetrated the meaning. 'She wishes,' he concluded, 'to see the meeting betwixt the Queen and me on my return, that she may form a guess whether there is any private intelligence or understanding betwixt us. I must be guarded.'

With this resolution he entered the parlour, where the Queen, seated in her chair, with the Lady Fleming leaning upon the back of it, had already kept the Lady of Lochleven standing in her presence for the space of nearly an hour, to the manifest increase of her very visible bad-humour. Roland Græme, on entering the apartment, made a deep obeisance to the Queen, and another to the lady, and then stood still as if to await their further question. Speaking almost together, the Lady Lochleven said, 'So, young man, you are returned at length?' And then stopped indignantly short, while the Queen went on without regarding her — 'Roland, you are welcome home to us; you have proved the true dove and not the raven. Yet I

am sure I could have forgiven you if, once dismissed from this water-circled ark of ours, you had never again returned to us. I trust you have brought back an olive branch, for our kind and worthy hostess has chafed herself much on account of your long absence, and we never needed more some symbol of peace and reconciliation.'

'I grieve I should have been detained, madam,' answered the page; 'but, from the delay of the person entrusted with the matters for which I was sent, I did not receive them till late in the day.'

'See you there now,' said the Queen to the Lady Lochleven; 'we could not persuade you, our dearest hostess, that your household goods were in all safe keeping and surety. True it is, that we can excuse your anxiety, considering that these august apartments are so scantily furnished that we have not been able to offer you even the relief of a stool during the long time you have afforded us the pleasure of your society.'

'The will, madam,' said the lady — 'the will to offer such accommodation was more wanting than the means.'

'What!' said the Queen, looking round, and affecting surprise, 'there are then stools in this apartment — one, two — no less than four, including the broken one — a royal garniture! We observed them not; will it please your ladyship to sit?'

'No, madam, I will soon relieve you of my presence,' replied the Lady Lochleven; 'and, while with you, my aged limbs can still better brook fatigue than my mind stoop to accept of constrained courtesy.'

'Nay, Lady of Lochleven, if you take it so deeply,' said the Queen, rising and motioning to her own vacant chair, 'I would rather you assumed my seat; you are not the first of your family who has done so.'

The Lady of Lochleven courtesied a negative, but seemed with much difficulty to suppress the angry answer which rose to her lips.

During this sharp conversation, the page's attention had been almost entirely occupied by the entrance of Catherine Seyton, who came from the inner apartment, in the usual dress in which she attended upon the Queen, and with nothing in her manner which marked either the hurry or confusion incident to a hasty change of disguise or the conscious fear of detection in a perilous enterprise. Roland Græme ventured to make her an obeisance as she entered, but she returned it with an air of the utmost indifference, which, in his opinion, was extremely incon-

sistent with the circumstances in which they stood towards each other. 'Surely,' he thought, 'she cannot in reason expect to bully me out of the belief due to mine own eyes, as she tried to do concerning the apparition in the hostelry of St. Michael's. I will try if I cannot make her feel that this will be but a vain task, and that confidence in me is the wiser and safer course to pursue.'

These thoughts had passed rapidly through his mind, when the Queen, having finished her altercation with the lady of the castle, again addressed him — 'What of the revels at Kinross, Roland Grème? Methought they were gay, if I may judge from some faint sounds of mirth and distant music which found their way so far as these grated windows, and died when they entered them, as all that is mirthful must. But thou lookest as sad as if thou hadst come from a conventicle of the Huguenots!'

'And so perchance he hath, madam,' replied the Lady of Lochleven, at whom this side-shaft was launched. 'I trust, amid yonder idle fooleries, there wanted not some pouring forth of doctrine to a better purpose than that vain mirth which, blazing and vanishing like the crackling of dry thorns, leaves to the fools who love it nothing but dust and ashes.'

'Mary Fleming,' said the Queen, turning round and drawing her mantle about her, 'I would that we had the chimney-grate supplied with a fagot or two of these same thorns which the Lady of Lochleven describes so well. Methinks the damp air from the lake, which stagnates in these vaulted rooms, renders them deadly cold.'

'Your Grace's pleasure shall be obeyed,' said the Lady of Lochleven; 'yet may I presume to remind you that we are now in summer!'

'I thank you for the information, my good lady,' said the Queen; 'for prisoners better learn their calendar from the mouth of their jailor than from any change they themselves feel in the seasons. Once more, Roland Grème, what of the revels?'

'They were gay, madam,' said the page, 'but of the usual sort, and little worth your Highness's ear.'

'Oh, you know not,' said the Queen, 'how very indulgent my ear has become to all that speaks of freedom and the pleasures of the free. Methinks I would rather have seen the gay villagers dance their ring round the Maypole than have witnessed the most stately masques within the precincts of a palace. The absence of stone walls, the sense that the green turf is under

the foot which may tread it free and unrestrained, is worth all that art or splendour can add to more courtly revels.'

'I trust,' said the Lady Lochleven, addressing the page in her turn, 'there were amongst these follies none of the riots or disturbances to which they so naturally lead!'

Roland gave a slight glance to Catherine Seyton, as if to bespeak her attention, as he replied, 'I witnessed no offence, madam, worthy of marking — none indeed of any kind, save that a bold damsel made her hand somewhat too familiar with the cheek of a player-man, and ran some hazard of being ducked in the lake.'

As he uttered these words he cast a hasty glance at Catherine; but she sustained, with the utmost serenity of manner and countenance, the hint which he had deemed could not have been thrown out before her without exciting some fear and confusion.

'I will cumber your Grace no longer with my presence,' said the Lady Lochleven, 'unless you have aught to command me.'

'Nought, our good hostess,' answered the Queen, 'unless it be to pray you, that on another occasion you deem it not needful to postpone your better employment to wait so long upon us.'

'May it please you,' added the Lady Lochleven, 'to command this your gentleman to attend us, that I may receive some account of these matters which have been sent hither for your Grace's use?'

'We may not refuse what you are pleased to require, madam,' answered the Queen. 'Go with the lady, Roland, if our commands be indeed necessary to thy doing so. We will hear to-morrow the history of thy Kinross pleasures. For this night we dismiss thy attendance.'

Roland Græme went with the Lady of Lochleven, who failed not to ask him many questions concerning what had passed at the sports, to which he rendered such answers as were most likely to lull asleep any suspicions which she might entertain of his disposition to favour Queen Mary, taking especial care to avoid all allusion to the apparition of Magdalen Græme and of the Abbot Ambrosius. At length, after undergoing a long and somewhat close examination, he was dismissed with such expressions as, coming from the reserved and stern Lady of Lochleven, might seem to express a degree of favour and countenance.

His first care was to obtain some refreshment, which was more cheerfully afforded him by a good natured pantler than by

Dryfesdale, who was, on this occasion, much disposed to abide by the fashion of Pudding-burn House, where

They who came not the first call
Get no more meat till the next meal.

When Roland Greeme had finished his repast, having his dismissal from the Queen for the evening, and being little inclined for such society as the castle afforded, he stole into the garden, in which he had permission to spend his leisure time, when it pleased him. In this place, the ingenuity of the contriver and disposer of the walks had exerted itself to make the most of little space, and by screens, both of stone ornamented with rude sculpture and hedges of living green, had endeavoured to give as much intricacy and variety as the confined limits of the garden would admit.

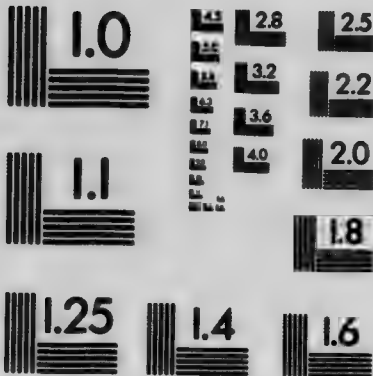
Here the young man walked sadly, considering the events of the day, and comparing what had dropped from the abbot with what he had himself noticed of the demeanour of George Douglas. 'It must be so,' was the painful but inevitable conclusion at which he arrived—'it must be by his aid that she is thus enabled, like a phantom, to transport herself from place to place, and to appear at pleasure on the mainland or on the islet. It must be so,' he repeated once more; 'with him she holds a close, secret, and intimate correspondence, altogether inconsistent with the eye of favour which she has sometimes cast upon me, and destructive to the hopes which she must have known these glances have necessarily inspired.' And yet (for love will hope where reason despairs) the thought rushed on his mind that it was possible she only encouraged Douglas's passion so far as might serve her mistress's interest, and that she was of too frank, noble, and candid a nature to hold out to himself hopes which she meant not to fulfil. Lost in these various conjectures, he seated himself upon a bank of turf, which commanded a view of the lake on the one side, and on the other of that front of the castle along which the Queen's apartments were situated.

The sun had now for some time set, and the twilight of May was rapidly fading into a serene night. On the lake, the expanded water rose and fell, with the slightest and softest influence of a southern breeze, which scarcely dimpled the surface over which it passed. In the distance was still seen the dim outline of the island of St. Serf, once visited by many a sandalled pilgrim, as the blessed spot trodden by a man of God; now neglected or violated, as the refuge of lazy priests, who had



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with justice been compelled to give place to the sheep and the heifers of a Protestant baron.

As Roland gazed on the dark speck, amid the lighter blue of the waters which surrounded it, the mazes of polemical discussion again stretched themselves before the eye of his mind. Had these men justly suffered their exile as licentious drones, the robbers, at once, and disgrace of the busy hive; or had the hand of avarice and rapine expelled from the temple not the ribalds who polluted, but the faithful priests who served, the shrine in honour and fidelity? The arguments of Henderson, in this contemplative hour, rose with double force before him, and could scarcely be parried by the appeal which the Abbot Ambrosius had made from his understanding to his feelings — an appeal which he had felt more forcibly amid the bustle of stirring life than now when his reflections were more undisturbed. It required an effort to divert his mind from this embarrassing topic; and he found that he best succeeded by turning his eyes to the front of the tower, watching where a twinkling light still streamed from the casement of Catherine Seyton's apartment, obscured by times for a moment, as the shadow of the fair inhabitant passed betwixt the taper and the window. At length the light was removed or extinguished, and that object of speculation was also withdrawn from the eyes of the meditative lover. Dare I confess the fact, without injuring his character for ever as a hero of romance? These eyes gradually became heavy; speculative doubts on the subject of religious controversy, and anxious conjectures concerning the state of his mistress's affections, became confusedly blended together in his musings; the fatigues of a busy day prevailed over the harassing subjects of contemplation which occupied his mind, and he fell fast asleep.

Sound were his slumbers, until they were suddenly dispelled by the iron tongue of the castle bell, which sent its deep and sullen sounds wide over the bosom of the lake, and awakened the echoes of Bennarty, the hill which descends steeply on its southern bank. Roland started up, for this bell was always tolled at ten o'clock, as the signal for locking the castle gates, and placing the keys under the charge of the seneschal. He therefore hastened to the wicket by which the garden communicated with the building, and had the mortification, just as he reached it, to hear the bolt leave its sheath with a discordant crash, and enter the stone groove of the door-lintel.

'Hold — hold,' cried the page, 'and let me in ere you lock the wicket.'

The voice of Dryfesdale replied from within, in his usual tone of imbittered sullenness, 'The hour is past, fair master; you like not the inside of these walls; even make it a complete holiday, and spend the night as well as the day out of bounds.'

'Open the door,' exclaimed the indignant page, 'or by St. Giles I will make thy gold chain smoke for it!'

'Make no alarm here,' retorted the impenetrable Dryfesdale, 'but keep thy sinful oaths and silly threats for those that regard them. I do mine office, and carry the keys to the seneschal. Adieu, my young master! the cool night air will advantage your hot blood.'

The steward was right in what he said; for the cooling breeze was very necessary to appease the feverish fit of anger which Roland experienced, nor did the remedy succeed for some time. At length, after some hasty turns made through the garden, exhausting his passion in vain vows of vengeance, Roland Græme began to be sensible that his situation ought rather to be held as matter of laughter than of serious resentment. To one bred a sportsman, a night spent in the open air had in it little of hardship, and the poor malice of the steward seemed more worthy of his contempt than his anger. 'I would to God,' he said, 'that the grim old man may always have contented himself with such sportive revenge. He often looks as he were capable of doing us a darker turn.' Returning, therefore, to the turf-seat which he had formerly occupied, and which was partially sheltered by a trim fence of green holly, he drew his mantle around him, stretched himself at length on the verdant settle, and endeavoured to resume that sleep which the castle bell had interrupted to so little purpose.

Sleep, like other earthly blessings, is niggard of its favours when most courted. The more Roland invoked her aid, the further she fled from his eyelids. He had been completely awakened, first by the sounds of the bell, and then by his own aroused vivacity of temper, and he found it difficult again to compose himself to slumber. At length, when his mind was wearied out with a maze of unpleasing meditation, he succeeded in coaxing himself into a broken slumber. This was again dispelled by the voices of two persons who were walking in the garden, the sound of whose conversation, after mingling for some time in the page's dreams, at length succeeded in awaking him thoroughly. He raised himself from his reclining posture in the utmost astonishment, which the circumstance of hearing two persons at that late hour conversing on the outside of the

watchfully guarded Castle of Lochleven was so well calculated to excite. His first thought was of supernatural beings ; his next, upon some attempt on the part of Queen Mary's friends and followers ; his last was that George of Douglas, possessed of the keys, and having the means of ingress and egress at pleasure, was availing himself of his office to hold a rendezvous with Catherine Seyton in the castle garden. He was confirmed in this opinion by the tone of the voice which asked in a low whisper 'Whether all was ready ?'

CHAPTER XXX

In some breasts passion lies conceal'd and silent,
Like war's swart powder in a castle vault,
Until occasion, like the linstock, lights it ;
Then comes at once the lightning and the thunder,
And distant echoes tell that all is rent asunder.

Old Play.

ROLAND GRÈME, availing himself of a breach in the holly screen, and of the assistance of the full moon, which was now arisen, had a perfect opportunity, himself unobserved, to reconnoitre the persons and the motions of those by whom his rest had been thus unexpectedly disturbed ; and his observations confirmed his jealous apprehensions. They stood together in close and earnest conversation within four yards of the place of his retreat, and he could easily recognise the tall form and deep voice of Douglas, and the no less remarkable dress and tone of the page at the hoste'rie of St. Michael's.

'I have been at the door of the page's apartment,' said Douglas, 'but he is not there, or he will not answer. It is fast bolted on the inside, as is the custom, and we cannot pass through it ; and what his silence may bode I know not.'

'You have trusted him too far,' said the other — 'a feather-headed coxcomb, upon whose changeable mind and hot brain there is no making an abiding impression.'

'It was not I who was willing to trust him,' said Douglas ; 'but I was assured he would prove friendly when called upon, for —' Here he spoke so low that Roland lost the tenor of his words, which was the more provoking as he was fully aware that he was himself the subject of their conversation.

'Nay,' replied the stranger, more aloud, 'I have on my side put him off with fair words, which make fools fain ; but now, if you distrust him at the push, deal with him with your dagger, and so make open passage.'

'That were too rash,' said Douglas ; 'and besides, as I told

you, the door of his apartment is shut and bolted. I will essay again to waken him.'

Grème instantly comprehended that the ladies, having been somehow made aware of his being in the garden, had secured the door of the outer room in which he usually slept, as a sort of sentinel upon that only access to the Queen's apartments. But then, how came Catherine Seyton to be abroad, if the Queen and the other lady were still within their chambers, and the access to them locked and bolted? 'I will be instantly at the bottom of these mysteries,' he said, 'and then thank Mistress Catherine, if this be really she, for the kind use which she exhorted Douglas to make of his dagger; they seek me, as I comprehend, and they shall not seek me in vain.'

Douglas had by this time re-entered the castle by the wicket, which was now open. The stranger stood alone in the garden walk, his arms folded on his breast, and his eyes cast impatiently up to the moon, as if accusing her of betraying him by the magnificence of her lustre. In a moment Roland Grème stood before him. 'A goodly night,' he said, 'Mistress Catherine, for a young lady to stray forth in disguise, and to meet with men in an orchard!'

'Hush!' said the stranger page — 'hush, thou foolish patch, and tell us in a word if thou art friend or foe.'

'How should I be friend to one who deceives me by fair words, and who would have Douglas deal with me with his poniard?' replied Roland.

'The fiend receive George of Douglas and thee too, thou born madcap and sworn marplot!' said the other; 'we shall be discovered, and then death is the word.'

'Catherine,' said the page, 'you have dealt falsely and cruelly with me, and the moment of explanation is now come: neither it nor you shall escape me.'

'Madman!' said the stranger, 'I am neither Kate nor Catherine: the moon shines bright enough surely to know the hart from the hind.'

'That shift shall not serve you, fair mistress,' said the page, laying hold on the lap of the stranger's cloak; 'this time, at least, I will know with whom I deal.'

'Unhand me,' said she, endeavouring to extricate herself from his grasp; and in a tone where anger seemed to contend with a desire to laugh, 'Use you so little discretion towards a daughter of Seyton?'

But as Roland, encouraged perhaps by her risibility to sup-

pose his violence was not unpardonably offensive, kept hold on her mantle, she said, in a sterner tone of unmixed resentment, 'Madman, let me go! there is life and death in this moment. I would not willingly hurt thee, and yet beware!'

As she spoke, she made a sudden effort to escape, and in doing so a pistol which she carried in her hand or about her person went off.

This warlike sound instantly awakened the well-warded castle. The warder blew his horn, and began to toll the castle bell, crying out at the same time, 'Fy, treason! — treason! cry all! — cry all!'

The apparition of Catherine Seyton, which the page had let loose in the first moment of astonishment, vanished in darkness, but the plash of oars was heard, and in a second or two five or six harquebusses and a falconet were fired from the battlements of the castle successively, as if levelled at some object on the water. Confounded with these incidents, no way for Catherine's protection (supposing her to be in the boat which he had heard put from the shore) occurred to Roland, save to have recourse to George of Douglas. He hastened for this purpose towards the apartment of the Queen, whence he heard loud voices and much trampling of feet. When he entered, he found himself added to a confused and astonished group, which, assembled in that apartment, stood gazing upon each other. At the upper end of the room stood the Queen, equipped as for a journey, and attended not only by the Lady Fleming, but by the omnipresent Catherine Seyton, dressed in the habit of her own sex, and bearing in her hand the casket in which Mary kept such jewels as she had been permitted to retain. At the other end of the hall was the Lady of Lochleven, hastily dressed, as one startled from slumber by the sudden alarm, and surrounded by domestics, some bearing torches, others holding naked swords, partizans, pistols, or such other weapons as they had caught up in the hurry of a night alarm. Betwixt these two parties stood George of Douglas, his arms folded on his breast, his eyes bent on the ground, like a criminal who knows not how to deny, yet continues unwilling to avow, the guilt in which he has been detected.

'Speak, George of Douglas,' said the Lady of Lochleven — 'speak, and clear the horrid suspicion which rests on thy name. Say, "A Douglas was never faithless to his trust, and I am a Douglas." Say this, my dearest son, and it is all I ask thee to say to clear thy name, even under such a foul charge. Say it

but the wile of these unhappy women and this false boy which plotted an escape so fatal to Scotland, so destructive to thy father's house.'

'Madam,' said old Dryfesdale, the steward, 'this much do I say for this silly page, that he could not be accessory to unlocking the doors, since I myself this night bolted him out of the castle. Whoever limned this night-piece, the lad's share in it seems to have been small.'

'Thou liest, Dryfesdale,' said the lady, 'and wouldst throw the blame on thy master's house, to save the worthless life of a gipsy boy.'

'His death were more desirable to me than his life,' answered the steward, sullenly; 'but the truth is the truth.'

At these words, Douglas raised his head, drew up his figure to its full height, and spoke boldly and sedately, as one whose resolution was taken. 'Let no life be endangered for me. I alone —'

'Douglas,' said the Queen, interrupting him, 'art thou mad? Speak not, I charge you.'

'Madam,' he replied, bowing with the deepest respect, 'gladly would I obey your commands, but they must have a victim, and let it be the true one. Yes, madam,' he continued, addressing the Lady of Lochleven, 'I alone am guilty in this matter. If the word of a Douglas has yet any weight with you, believe me that this boy is innocent; and on your conscience I charge you, do him no wrong; nor let the Queen suffer hardship for embracing the opportunity of freedom which sincere loyalty — which a sentiment yet deeper — offered to her acceptance. Yes! I had planned the escape of the most beautiful, the most persecuted of women; and far from regretting that I, for a while, deceived the malice of her enemies, I glory in it, and am most willing to yield up life itself in her cause.'

'Now, may God have compassion on my age,' said the Lady of Lochleven, 'and enable me to bear this load of sorrow. O Princess, born in a luckless hour, when will you cease to be the instrument of seduction and of ruin to all who approach you? O ancient house of Lochleven, famed so long for birth and honour, evil was the hour which brought the deceiver under thy roof!'

'Say not so, madam,' replied her grandson; 'the old honours of the Douglas line will be outshone when one of its descendants dies for the most injured of queens — for the most lovely of women.'

'Douglas,' said the Queen, 'must I at this moment — ay, even at this moment, when I may lose a faithful subject for ever — chide thee for forgetting what is due to me as thy queen?'

'Wretched boy,' said the distracted Lady of Lochleven, 'hast thou fallen even thus far into the snare of this Moubitish woman? — hast thou bartered thy name, thy allegiance, thy knightly oath, thy duty to thy parents, thy country, and thy God, for a feigned tear, or a sickly smile, from lips which flattered the infirm Francis — lured to death the idiot Darnley — read luscious poetry with the minion Chastelar — mingled in the lays of love which were sung by the beggar Rizzio — and which were joined in rapture to those of the foul and licentious Bothwell?'

'Blaspheme not, madam!' said Douglas; 'nor you, fair Queen, and virtuous as fair, chide at this moment the presumption of thy vassal! Think not that the mere devotion of a subject could have moved me to the part I have been performing. Well you deserve that each of your lieges should die for you; but I have done more — have done that to which love alone could compel a Douglas: I have dissembled. Farewell, then, queen of all hearts, and empress of that of Douglas! When you are freed from this vile bondage — as freed you shall be, if justice remains in Heaven — and when you load with honours and titles the happy man who shall deliver you, cast one thought on him whose heart would have desired every reward for a kiss of your hand — cast one thought on his fidelity, and drop one tear on his grave.' And throwing himself at her feet, he seized her hand, and pressed it to his lips.

'This before my face!' exclaimed the Lady of Lochleven — 'wilt thou court thy adulterous paramour before the eyes of a parent? Tear them asunder, and put him under strict ward! Seize him, upon your lives!' she added, seeing that her attendants looked on each other with hesitation.

'They are doubtful,' said Mary. 'Save thyself, Douglas, I command thee!'

He started up from the floor, and only exclaiming, 'My life or death are yours, and at your disposal!' drew his sword, and broke through those who stood betwixt him and the door. The enthusiasm of his onset was too sudden and too lively to have been resisted by anything short of the most decided opposition; and as he was both loved and feared by his father's vassals, none of them would offer him any actual injury.

The Lady of Lochleven stood astonished at his sudden

escape. 'Am I surrounded,' she said, 'by traitors? Upon him, villains! — pursue, stab, cut him down!'

'He cannot leave the island, madam,' said Dryfesdale, interfering: 'I have the key of the boat-chain.'

But two or three voices of those who pursued from curiosity or command of their mistress exclaimed from below, that he had cast himself into the lake.

'Brave Douglas still!' exclaimed the Queen. 'Oh, true and noble heart, that prefers death to imprisonment!'

'Fire upon him!' said the Lady of Lochleven: 'if there be here a true servant of his father, let him shoot the runagate dead, and let the lake cover our shame!'

The report of a gun or two was heard, but they were probably shot rather to obey the lady than with any purpose of hitting the mark; and Randal immediately entering, said that Master George had been taken up by a boat from the castle, which lay at a little distance.

'Man a barge and pursue them!' said the lady.

'It were quite vain,' said Randal; 'by this time they are half-way to shore, and a cloud has come over the moon.'

'And has the traitor then escaped?' said the lady, pressing her hands against her forehead with a gesture of despair; 'the honour of our house is for ever gone, and all will be deemed accomplices in this base treachery!'

'Lady of Lochleven,' said Mary, advancing towards her, 'you have this night cut off my fairest hopes: you have turned my expected freedom into bondage, and dashed away the cup of joy in the very instant I was advancing it to my lips; and yet I feel for your sorrow the pity that you deny to mine. Gladly would I comfort you if I might; but as I may not, I would at least part from you in charity.'

'Away, proud woman!' said the lady; 'who ever knew so well as thou to deal the deepest wounds under the pretence of kindness and courtesy? Who, since the great traitor, could ever so betray with a kiss?'

'Lady Douglas of Lochleven,' said the Queen, 'in this moment thou canst not offend me — no, not even by thy coarse and unwomanly language, held to me in the presence of menials and armed retainers. I have this night owed so much to one member of the house of Lochleven as to cancel whatever its mistress can do or say in the wildness of her passion.'

'We are bounden to you, Princess,' said Lady Lochleven, putting a strong constraint on herself, and passing from her

tone of violence to that of bitter irony; 'our poor house hath been but seldom graced with royal smiles, and will hardly, with my choice, exchange their rough honesty for such court honour as Mary of Scotland has now to bestow.'

'They,' replied Mary, 'who knew so well how to take may think themselves excused from the obligation implied in receiving. And that I have now little to offer is the fault of the Douglasses and their allies.'

'Fear nothing, madam,' replied the Lady of Lochleven, in the same bitter tone, 'you retain an exchequer which neither your own prodigality can drain nor your offended country deprive you of. While you have fair words and delusive smiles at command, you need no other bribes to lure youth to folly.'

The Queen cast a not ungratified glance on a large mirror, which, hanging on one side of the apartment, and illuminated by the torch-light, reflected her beautiful face and person. 'Our hostess grows complaisant,' she said, 'my Fleming; we had not thought that grief and captivity had left us so well stored with that sort of wealth which ladies prize most dearly.'

'Your Grace will drive this severe woman frantic,' said Fleming, in a low tone. 'On my knees I implore you to remember she is already dreadfully offended, and that we are in her power.'

'I will not spare her, Fleming,' answered the Queen; 'it is against my nature. She returned my honest sympathy with insult and abuse, and I will gall her in return. If her words are too blunt for answer, let her use her poniard if she dare!'

'The Lady Lochleven,' said the Lady Fleming aloud, 'would surely do well now to withdraw and to leave her Grace to repose.'

'Ay,' replied the lady, 'or to leave her Grace and her Grace's minions to think what silly fly they may next wrap their meshes about. My eldest son is a widower — were he not more worthy the flattering hopes with which you have seduced his brother? True, the yoke of marriage has been already thrice fitted on; but the Church of Rome calls it a sacrament, and its votaries may deem it one in which they cannot too often participate.'

'And the votaries of the Church of Geneva,' replied Mary, colouring with indignation, 'as they deem marriage *no sacrament*, are said at times to dispense with the holy ceremony.' Then, as if afraid of the consequences of this home allusion to the errors of Lady Lochleven's early life, the Queen added, 'Come, my Fleming, we grace her too much by this alterca-

tion : we will to our sleeping-apartment. If she would disturb us again to-night, she must cause the door to be forced.' So saying, she retired to her bedroom, followed by her two women. Lady Lochleven, stunned as it were by this last sarcasm, and not the less deeply incensed that she had drawn it upon herself, remained like a statue on the spot which she had occupied when she received an affront so flagrant. Dryfesdale and Randal endeavoured to rouse her to recollection by questions.

'What is your honourable ladyship's pleasure in the premises ?'

'Shall we not double the sentinels, and place one upon the boats and another in the garden ?' said Randal.

'Would you that despatches were sent to Sir William at Edinburgh, to acquaint him with what has happened ?' demanded Dryfesdale ; 'and ought not the place of Kinross to be alarmed, lest there be force upon the shores of the lake ?'

'Do all as thou wilt,' said the lady, collecting herself, and about to depart. 'Thou hast the name of a good soldier, Dryfesdale, take all precautions. Sacred Heaven ! that I should be thus openly insulted !'

'Would it be your pleasure,' said Dryfesdale, hesitating, 'that this person — this lady — be more severely restrained ?'

'No, vassal !' answered the lady, indignantly, 'my revenge stoops not to so low a gratification. But I will have more worthy vengeance, or the tomb of my ancestors shall cover my shame !'

'And you shall have it, madam,' replied Dryfesdale. 'Ere two suns go down, you shall term yourself amply revenged.'

The lady made no answer, perhaps did not hear his words, as she presently left the apartment. By the command of Dryfesdale, the rest of the attendants were dismissed, some to do the duty of guard, others to their repose. The steward himself remained after they had all departed ; and Roland Graeme, who was alone in the apartment, was surprised to see the old soldier advance towards him with an air of greater cordiality than he had ever before assumed to him, but which sat ill on his scowling features.

'Youth,' he said, 'I have done thee some wrong : it is thine own fault, for thy behaviour hath seemed as light to me as the feather thou wearest in thy hat ; and surely thy fantastic apparel, and idle humour of mirth and folly, have made me construe thee something harshly. But I saw this night from my casement, as I looked out to see how thou hadst disposed of thyself in the garden — I saw, I say, the true efforts which

thou didst make to detain the companion of the perfidy of him who is no longer worthy to be called by his father's name, but must be cut off from his house like a rotten branch. I was just about to come to thy assistance when the pistol went off; and the warder—a false knave, whom I suspect to be bribed for the nonce—saw himself forced to give the alarm, which, perchance, till then he had wilfully withheld. To atone, therefore, for my injustice towards you, I would willingly render you a courtesy, if you would accept of it from my hands.'

'May I first crave to know what it is?' replied the page.

'Simply to carry the news of this discovery to Holyrood, where thou mayest do thyself much grace, as well with the Earl of Morton and the Regent himself as with Sir William Douglas, seeing thou hast seen the matter from end to end, and borne faithful part therein. The making thine own fortune will be thus lodged in thine own hand, when I trust thou wilt estrange thyself from foolish vanities, and learn to walk in this world as one who thinks upon the next.'

Sir steward,' said Roland Graeme, 'I thank you for your courtesy, but I may not do your errand. I pass that I am the Queen's sworn servant, and may not be of counsel against her. But, setting this apart, methinks it were a bad road to Sir William of Lochleven's favour to be the first to tell him of his son's defection; neither would the Regent be over well pleased to hear the infidelity of his vassal, nor Morton to learn the falsehood of his kinsman.'

'Um!' said the steward, making that inarticulate sound which expresses surprise mingled with displeasure. 'Nay, then, even fly where ye list; for, giddy-pated as ye may be, you know how to bear you in 'the world.'

'I will show you my esteem—less selfish than ye think for,' said the page; 'for I hold truth and mirth to be better than gravity and cunning—ay, and in the end to be a match for them. You never loved me less, sir steward, than you do at this moment. I know you will give me no real confidence, and I am resolved to accept no false protestations as current coin. Resume your old course: suspect me as much and watch me as closely as you will, I bid you defiance. You have met with your match.'

'By Heaven, young man,' said the steward, with a look of bitter malignity, 'if thou darest to attempt any treachery towards the house of Lochleven, thy head shall blacken in the sun from the warder's turret!'

'He cannot commit treachery who refuses trust,' said the page; 'and for my head, it stands as securely on my shoulders as on any turret that ever mason built.'

'Farewell, thou prating and speckled pie,' said Dryfesdale, 'that art so vain of thine idle tongue and variegated coat! Beware trap and lime-twig.'

'And fare thee well, thou hoarse old raven,' answered the page; 'thy solemn flight, sable hue, and deep croak are no charms against bird-bolt or hail-shot, and that thou mayest find. It is open war betwixt us, each for the cause of our mistress, and God show the right!'

'Amen, and defend His own people!' said the steward. 'I will let my mistress know what addition thou hast made to this mess of traitors. Good-night, Monsieur Featherpate.'

'Good-night, Seignior Sowersby,' replied the page; and, when the old man departed, he betook himself to rest.

CHAPTER XXXI

Poison'd — ill fare ! dead, forsook, cast off !

King John.

HOWEVER weary Roland Græme might be of the Castle of Lochleven, however much he might wish that the plan for Mary's escape had been perfected, I question if he ever awoke with more pleasing feelings than on the morning after George Douglas's plan for accomplishing her deliverance had been frustrated. In the first place, he had the clearest conviction that he had misunderstood the innuendo of the abbot, and that the affections of Douglas were fixed, not on Catherine Seyton, but on the Queen ; and in the second place, from the sort of explanation which had taken place betwixt the steward and him, he felt himself at liberty, without any breach of honour towards the family of Lochleven, to contribute his best aid to any scheme which should in future be formed for the Queen's escape ; and, independently of the good-will which he himself had to the enterprise, he knew he could find no surer road to the favour of Catherine Seyton. He now sought but an opportunity to inform her that he had dedicated himself to this task, and fortune was propitious in affording him one which was unusually favourable.

At the ordinary hour of breakfast, it was introduced by the steward with his usual forms, who, as soon as it was placed on the board in the inner apartment, said to Roland Græme, with a glance of sarcastic import, 'I leave you, my young sir, to do the office of sewer ; it has been too long rendered to the Lady Mary by one belonging to the house of Douglas.'

'Were it the prime and principal who ever bore the name,' said Roland, 'the office were an honour to him.'

The steward departed without replying to this bravade, otherwise than by a dark look of scorn. Græme, thus left alone, busied himself, as one engaged in a labour of love, to imitate, as well as he could, the grace and courtesy with which

George of Douglas was wont to render his ceremonial service at meals to the Queen of Scotland. There was more than youthful vanity, there was a generous devotion, in the feeling with which he took up the task, as a brave soldier assumes the place of a comrade who has fallen in the front of battle. 'I am now,' he said, 'their only champion; and, come weal, come woe, I will be, to the best of my skill and power, as faithful, as trustworthy, as brave, as any Douglas of them all could have been.'

At this moment Catherine Seyton entered alone, contrary to her custom; and not less contrary to her custom, she entered with her kerchief at her eyes. Roland Græme approached her with beating heart and with downcast eyes, and asked her in a low and hesitating voice whether the Queen were well.

'Can you suppose it?' said Catherine; 'think you her heart and body are framed of steel and iron, to endure the cruel disappointment of yestereven, and the infamous taunts of yonder Puritanic hag? Would to God that I were a man, to aid her more effectually!'

'If those who carry pistols, and batons, and poniards,' said the page, 'are not men, they are at least Amazons, and that is as formidable.'

'You are welcome to the flash of your wit, sir,' replied the damsel; 'I am neither in spirits to enjoy nor to reply to it.'

'Well, then,' said the page, 'list to me in all serious truth. And, first, let me say, that the gear last night had been smother had you taken me into your counsels.'

'And so we meant; but who could have guessed that Master Page should choose to pass all night in the garden, like some moon-stricken knight in a Spanish romance, instead of being in his bedroom, when Douglas came to hold communication with him on our project?'

'And why,' said the page, 'defer to so late a moment so important a confidence?'

'Because your communications with Henderson, and — with pardon — the natural impetuosity and fickleness of your disposition, made us dread to entrust you with a secret of such consequence till the last moment.'

'And why at the last moment?' said the page, offended at this frank avowal — 'why at that or any other moment, since I had the misfortune to incur so much suspicion?'

'Nay, now you are angry again,' said Catherine; 'and to serve you aright I should break off this talk; but I will be

magnanimous, and answer your question. Know, then, our reason for trusting you was twofold. In the first place, we could scarce avoid it, since you slept in the room through which we had to pass. In the second place ——'

'Nay,' said the page, 'you may dispense with a second reason, when the first makes your confidence in me a case of necessity.'

'Good now, hold thy peace,' said Catherine. 'In the second place, as I said before, there is one foolish person among us who believes that Roland Graeme's heart is warm, though his head is giddy; that his blood is pure, though it boils too hastily; and that his faith and honour are true as the loadstar, though his tongue sometimes is far less than discreet.'

This avowal Catherine repeated in a low tone, with her eyes fixed on the floor, as if she shunned the glance of Roland while she suffered it to escape her lips. 'And this single friend,' exclaimed the youth in rapture — 'this only one who would do justice to the poor Roland Graeme, and whose own generous heart taught her to distinguish between follies of the brain and faults of the heart — will you not tell me, dearest Catherine, to whom I owe my most grateful, my most heartfelt thanks?'

'Nay,' said Catherine, with her eyes still fixed on the ground, 'if your own heart tell you not ——'

'Dearest Catherine!' said the page, seizing upon her hand, and kneeling on one knee.

'If your own heart, I say, tell you not,' said Catherine, gently disengaging her hand, 'it is very ungrateful; for since the maternal kindness of the Lady Fleming ——'

The page started on his feet. 'By Heaven, Catherine, your tongue wears as many disguises as your person! But you only mock me, cruel girl. You know the Lady Fleming has no more regard for any one than hath the forlorn princess who is wrought into yonder piece of old figured court-tapestry.'

'It may be so,' said Catherine Seyton, 'but you should not speak so loud.'

'Pshaw!' answered the page, but at the same time lowering his voice, 'she cares for no one but herself and the Queen. And you know, besides, there is no one of you whose opinion I value, if I have not your own. No — not that of Queen Mary herself.'

'The more shame for you, if it be so,' said Catherine, with great composure.

'Nay, but, fair Catherine,' said the page, 'why will you thus

damp my ardour, when I am devoting myself, body and soul, to the cause of your mistress !'

'It is because in doing so,' said Catherine, 'you debase a cause so noble by naming along with it any lower or more selfish motive. Believe me,' she said, with kindling eyes, and while the blood mantled on her cheek, 'they think vilely and falsely of women — I mean of those who deserve the name — who deem that they love the gratification of their vanity, or the mean purpose of engrossing a lover's admiration and affection, better than they love the virtue and honour of the man they may be brought to prefer. He that serves his religion, his prince, and his country with ardour and devotion need not plead his cause with the commonplace rant of romantic passion : the woman whom he honours with his love becomes his debtor, and her corresponding affection is engaged to repay his glorious toil.'

'You hold a glorious prize for such toil,' said the youth, bending his eyes on her with enthusiasm.

'Only a heart which knows how to value it,' said Catherine. 'He that should free this injured princess from these dungeons, and set her at liberty among her loyal and warlike nobles, whose hearts are burning to welcome her — where is the maiden in Scotland whom the love of such a hero would not honour, were she sprung from the blood royal of the land, and he the offspring of the poorest cottager that ever held a plough !'

'I am determined,' said Roland, 'to take the adventure. Tell me first, however, fair Catherine, and speak it as if you were confessing to the priest — this poor Queen, I know she is unhappy — but, Catherine, do you hold her innocent ? She is accused of murder.'

'Do I hold the lamb guilty, because it is assailed by the wolf ?' answered Catherine. 'Do I hold yonder sun polluted, because an earth-damp sullies his beams ?'

The page sighed and looked down. 'Would my conviction were as deep as thine ! But one thing is clear, that in this captivity she hath wrong. She rendered herself up on a capitulation, and the terms have been refused her. I will embrace her quarrel to the death !'

'Will you — will you, indeed ?' said Catherine, taking his hand in her turn. 'Oh be but firm in mind, as thou art bold in deed and quick in resolution ; keep but thy plighted faith, and after ages shall honour thee as the saviour of Scotland !'

'But when I have toiled successfully to win that Leah,

honour, thou wilt not, my Catherine,' said the page, 'condemn me to a new term of service for that Rachel, love?'

'Of that,' said Catherine, again extricating her hand from his grasp, 'we shall have full time to speak; but honour is the elder sister, and must be won the first.'

'I may not win her,' answered the page; 'but I will venture fairly for her, and man can do no more. And know, fair Catherine — for you shall see the very secret thought of my heart — that not honour only, not only that other and fairer sister, whom you frown on me for so much as mentioning, but the stern commands of duty also, compel me to aid the Queen's deliverance.'

'Indeed!' said Catherine; 'you were wont to have doubts on that matter.'

'Ay, but her life was not then threatened,' replied Roland.

'And is it now more endangered than heretofore?' asked Catherine Seyton, in anxious terror.

'Be not alarmed,' said the page; 'but you heard the terms on which your royal mistress parted with the Lady of Lochleven?'

'Too well — but too well,' said Catherine; 'alas! that she cannot rule her princely resentment, and refrain from encounters like these!'

'That hath passed betwixt them,' said Roland, 'for which woman never forgives woman. I saw the lady's brow turn pale, and then black, when, before all the menzie, and in her moment of power, the Queen humbled her to the dust by taxing her with her shame. And I heard the oath of deadly resentment and revenge which she muttered in the ear of one who, by his answer, will, I judge, be but too ready an executioner of her will.'

'You terrify me,' said Catherine.

'Do not so take it; call up the masculine part of your spirit; we will counteract and defeat her plans, be they dangerous as they may. Why do you look upon me thus, and weep?'

'Alas!' said Catherine, 'because you stand there before me a living and breathing man, in all the adventurous glow and enterprise of youth, yet still possessing the frolic spirits of childhood — there you stand, full alike of generous enterprise and childish recklessness; and if to-day, or to-morrow, or some such brief space, you lie a mangled and lifeless corpse on the floor of these hateful dungeons, who but Catherine Seyton will be the cause of your brave and gay career being broken short as you start from the goal? Alas! she whom you have chosen

to twine your wreath may too, probably have to work your shroud !'

'And be it so, Catherine,' said the page, in the full glow of youthful enthusiasm ; 'and *do* thou work my shroud ! and if thou grace it with such tears as fall now at the thought, it will honour my remains more than an earl's mantle would my living body. But shame on this faintness of heart ! the time craves a firmer mood. Be a woman, Catherine, or rather be a man ; thou canst be a man if thou wilt.'

Catherine dried her tears, and endeavoured to smile.

'You must not ask me,' she said, 'about that which so much disturbs your mind ; you shall know all in time — nay, you should know all now, but that — Hush ! here comes the Queen.'

Mary entered from her apartment, paler than usual, and apparently exhausted by a sleepless night, and by the painful thoughts which had ill supplied the place of repose ; yet the languor of her looks were so far from impairing her beauty that it only substituted the frail delicacy of the lovely woman for the majestic grace of the Queen. Contrary to her wont, her toilette had been very hastily despatched, and her hair, which was usually dressed by Lady Fleming with great care, escaping from beneath the head-tire, which had been hastily adjusted, fell, in long and luxuriant tresses of nature's own curling, over a neck and bosom which were somewhat less carefully veiled than usual.

As she stepped over the threshold of her apartment, Catherine, hastily drying her tears, ran to meet her royal mistress, and having first kneeled at her feet and kissed her hand, instantly rose, and placing herself on the other side of the Queen, seemed anxious to divide with the Lady Fleming the honour of supporting and assisting her. The page, on his part, advanced and put in order the chair of state, which she usually occupied, and having placed the cushion and footstool for her accommodation, stepped back, and stood ready for service in the place usually occupied by his predecessor, the young seneschal. Mary's eye rested an instant on him, and could not but remark the change of persons. Hers was not the female heart which could refuse compassion, at least, to a gallant youth who had suffered in her cause, although he had been guided in his enterprise by a too presumptuous passion, and the words 'Poor Douglas !' escaped from her lips, perhaps unconsciously, as she leant herself back in her chair, and put the kerchief to her eyes.

'Yes, gracious madam,' said Catherine, assuming a cheerful manner, in order to cheer her sovereign, 'our gallant knight is indeed banished — the adventure was not reserved for him; but he has left behind him a youthful esquire as much devoted to your Grace's service, and who, by me, makes you tender of his hand and sword.'

'If they may in aught avail your Grace,' said Roland Græme, bowing profoundly.

'Alas!' said the Queen, 'what needs this, Catherine? — why prepare new victims to be involved in, and overwhelmed by, my cruel fortune? Were we not better cease to struggle, and ourselves sink in the tide without further resistance, than thus drag into destruction with us every generous heart which makes an effort in our favour? I have had but too much of plot and intrigue around me, since I was stretched an orphan child in my very cradle, while contending nobles strove which should rule in the name of the unconscious innocent. Surely time it were that all this busy and most dangerous coil should end. Let me call my prison a convent, and my seclusion a voluntary sequestration of myself from the world and its ways!'

'Speak not thus, madam, before your faithful servants,' said Catherine, 'to discourage their zeal at once and to break their hearts. Daughter of kings, be not in this hour so unkingly. Come, Roland, and let us, the youngest of her followers, show ourselves worthy of her cause: let us kneel before her stool, and implore her to be her own magnanimous self.' And leading Roland Græme to the Queen's seat, they both kneeled down before her. Mary raised herself in her chair, and sat erect, while, extending one hand to be kissed by the page, she arranged with the other the clustering locks which shaded the bold yet lovely brow of the high-spirited Catherine.

'Alas! *ma mignonne*,' she said, for so in fondness she often called her young attendant, 'that you should thus desperately mix with my unhappy fate the fortune of your young lives! Are they not a lovely couple, my Fleming? and is it not heart-rending to think that I must be their ruin?'

'Not so,' said Roland Græme; 'it is we, gracious sovereign, who will be your deliverers.'

'*Ex oribus parvulorum!*' said the Queen, looking upward, 'if it is by the mouth of these children that Heaven calls me to resume the stately thoughts which become my birth and my rights, Thou wilt grant them Thy protection, and to me the power of rewarding their zeal!' Then turning to Fleming,

she instantly added, 'Thou knowest, my friend, whether to make those who have served me happy was not ever Mary's favourite pastime. When I have been rebuked by the stern preachers of the Calvinistic heresy, when I have seen the fierce countenances of my nobles averted from me, has it not been because I mixed in the harmless pleasures of the young and gay, and, rather for the sake of their happiness than my own, have mingled in the masque, the song, or the dance, with the youth of my household? Well, I repent not of it, though Knox termed it sin, and Morton degradation. I was happy, because I saw happiness around me; and woe betide the wretched jealousy that can extract guilt out of the overflowings of an unguarded gaiety! Fleming, if we are restored to our throne, shall we not have one blithesome day at a blithesome bridal, of which we must now name neither the bride nor the bridegroom? But that bridegroom shall have the barony of Blairgowrie, a fair gift even for a queen to give, and that bride's chaplet shall be twined with the fairest pearls that ever were found in the depths of Loch Lomond; and thou thyself, Mary Fleming, the best dresser of tresses that ever busked the tresses of a queen, and who would scorn to touch those of any woman of lower rank — thou thyself shalt, for my love, twine them into the bride's tresses. Look, my Fleming, suppose these such clustered locks as those of our Catherine, they would not put shame upon thy skill.'

So saying, she passed her hand fondly over the head of her youthful favourite, while her more aged attendant replied despondently, 'Alas! madam, your thoughts stray far from home.'

'They do, my Fleming,' said the Queen; 'but is it well or kind in you to call them back? God knows, they have kept the perch this night but too closely. Come, I will recall the gay vision, were it but to punish them. Yes, at that blithesome bridal Mary herself shall forget the weight of sorrows and the toil of state, and herself once more lead a measure. At whose wedding was it that we last danced, my Fleming? I think care has troubled my memory — yet something of it I should remember; canst thou not aid me? I know thou canst.'

'Alas! madam,' replied the lady —

'What!' said Mary, 'wilt thou not help us so far? This is a peevish adherence to thine own graver opinion, which holds our talk as folly. But thou art court-bred, and wilt well understand me when I say, the Queen *commands* Lady Fleming to tell her where she led the last "branze."'

With a face deadly pale, and a mien as if she were about to sink into the earth, the court-bred dame, no longer daring to refuse obedience, faltered out — ‘Gracious lady — if my memory err not — it was at a masque in Holyrood — at the marriage of Sebastian.’

The unhappy Queen, who had hitherto listened with a melancholy smile, provoked by the reluctance with which the Lady Fleming brought out her story, at this ill-fated word interrupted her with a shriek so wild and loud that the vaulted apartment rang, and both Roland and Catherine sprung to their feet in the utmost terror and alarm. Meantime, Mary seemed, by the train of horrible ideas thus suddenly excited, surprised not only beyond self-command, but for the moment beyond the verge of reason.

‘Traitor!’ she said to the Lady Fleming, ‘thou wouldst slay thy sovereign. Call my French guards — *à moi ! — à moi ! mes Français !* I am beset with traitors in mine own palace — they have murdered my husband. Rescue! — rescue! for the Queen of Scotland!’ She started up from her chair; her features, late so exquisitely lovely in their paleness, now inflamed with the fury of frenzy, and resembling those of a Bellona. ‘We will take the field ourself,’ she said; ‘warn the city — warn Lothian and Fife — saddle our Spanish barb — and bid French Paris see our petronel be charged! Better to die at the head of our brave Scotsmen, like our grandfather at Flodden, than of a broken heart, like our ill-starred father!’

‘Be patient — be composed, dearest sovereign!’ said Catherine; and then addressing Lady Fleming angrily, she added, ‘How could you say aught that reminded her of her husband?’

The word reached the ear of the unhappy princess, who caught it up, speaking with great rapidity. ‘Husband! — what husband? Not his most Christian Majesty; he is ill at ease — he cannot mount on horseback. Not him of the Lennox; but it was the Duke of Orkney thou wouldst say.’

‘For God’s love, madam, be patient!’ said the Lady Fleming.

But the Queen’s excited imagination could by no entreaty be diverted from its course. ‘Bid him come hither to our aid,’ she said, ‘and bring with him his lambs, as he calls them — Bowton, Hay of Talla, Black Ormiston, and his kinsman Hob. Pie! how swart they are, and how they smell of sulphur! What! closeted with Morton? Nay, if the Douglas and the Hepburn hatch the complot together, the bird, when it breaks the shell, will scare Scotland, will it not, my Fleming?’

'She grows wilder and wilder,' said Fleming; 'we have too many hearers for these strange words.'

'Roland,' said Catherine, 'in the name of God, begone! You cannot aid us here. Leave us to deal with her alone. Away away!'

She thrust him to the door of the ante-room; yet even when he had entered that apartment and shut the door, he could still hear the Queen talk in a loud and determined tone, as if giving forth orders, until at length the voice died away in a feeble and continued lamentation.

At this crisis Catherine entered the ante-room. 'Be not too anxious,' she said, 'the crisis is now over; but keep the door fast — let no one enter until she is more composed.'

'In the name of God, what does this mean?' said the page; 'or what was there in the Lady Fleming's words to excite so wild a transport?'

'Oh, the Lady Fleming — the Lady Fleming,' said Catherine, repeating the words impatiently — 'the Lady Fleming is a fool: she loves her mistress, yet knows so little how to express her love that, were the Queen to ask her for very poison, she would deem it a point of duty not to resist her commands. I could have torn her starched head-tire from her formal head. The Queen should have as soon had the heart out of my body as the word "Sebastian" out of my lips. That that piece of weaved tapestry should be a woman, and yet not have wit enough to tell a lie!'

'And what was this story of Sebastian?' said the page. 'By Heaven, Catherine, you are all riddles alike!'

'You are as great a fool as Fleming,' returned the impatient maiden. 'Know ye not, that on the night of Henry Darnley's murder, and at the blowing up of the Kirk of Field, the Queen's absence was owing to her attending on a masque at Holyrood, given by her to grace the marriage of this same Sebastian, who, himself a favoured servant, married one of her female attendants, who was near to her person?'

'By St. Giles,' said the page, 'I wonder not at her passion, but only marvel by what forgetfulness it was that she could urge the Lady Fleming with such a question.'

'I cannot account for it,' said Catherine; 'but it seems as if great and violent grief or horror sometimes obscure the memory, and spread a cloud, like that of an exploding cannon, over the circumstances with which they are accompanied. But I may not stay here, where I came not to moralise with your

wisdom but simply to cool my resentment against that unwise Lady Fleming, which I think hath now somewhat abated, so that I shall endure her presence without any desire to damage either her church or vasquire. Meanwhile, keep fast that door: I would not for my life that any of these heretics saw her in the unhappy state which, brought on her as it has been by the success of their own diabolical plottings, they would not stick to call, in their snuffing cant, the judgment of Providence.'

She left the apartment just as the latch of the outward door was raised from without. But the bolt, which Roland had drawn on the inside, resisted the efforts of the person desirous to enter.

'Who is there?' said Graeme aloud.

'It is I,' replied the harsh and yet low voice of the steward Dryfesdale.

'You cannot enter now,' returned the youth.

'And wherefore?' demanded Dryfesdale, 'seeing I come but to do my duty, and inquire what mean the shrieks from the apartment of the Moabitish woman. Wherefore, I say, since such is mine errand, can I not enter?'

'Simply,' replied the youth, 'because the bolt is drawn, and I have no fancy to undo it. I have the right side of the door to-day, as you had last night.'

'Thou art ill-advised, thou malapert boy,' replied the steward, 'to speak to me in such fashion; but I shall inform my lady of thine insolence.'

'The insolence,' said the page, 'is meant for thee only, in fair guerdon of thy discourtesy to me. For thy lady's information, I have answer more courteous: you may say that the Queen is ill at ease, and desires to be disturbed neither by visits nor messages.'

'I conjure you, in the name of God,' said the old man, with more solemnity in his tone than he had hitherto used, 'to let me know if her malady really gains power on her!'

'She will have no aid at your hand or at your lady's; wherefore, begone, and trouble us no more: we neither want, nor will accept of, aid at your hands.'

With this positive reply, the steward, grumbling and dissatisfied, returned downstairs.

CHAPTER XXXII

It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves, who take their humours for a warrant
To break into the bloody house of life,
And on the winking of authority
To understand a law.

King John.

THE Lady of Lochleven sat alone in her chamber, endeavouring with sincere but imperfect zeal to fix her eyes and her attention on the black-lettered Bible which lay before her, bound in velvet and embroidery, and adorned with massive silver clasps and knops. But she found her utmost efforts unable to withdraw her mind from the resentful recollection of what had last night passed betwixt her and the Queen, in which the latter had with such bitter taunt reminded her of her early and long-repented transgression.

'Why,' she said, 'should I resent so deeply that another reproaches me with that which I have never ceased to make matter of blushing to myself? And yet, why should this woman, who reaps—at least, has reaped—the fruits of my folly, and has jostled my son aside from the throne—why should she, in the face of all my domestics and of her own, dare to upbraid me with my shame? Is she not in my power? Does she not fear me? Ha! wily tempter, I will wrestle with thee strongly, and with better suggestions than my own evil heart can supply!'

She again took up the sacred volume, and was endeavouring to fix her attention on its contents, when she was disturbed by a tap at the door of the room. It opened at her command, and the steward Dryfesdale entered, and stood before her with a gloomy and perturbed expression on his brow.

'What has chanced, Dryfesdale, that thou lookest thus?' said his mistress. 'Have there been evil tidings of my son or of my grandchildren?'

'No, lady,' replied Dryfesdale, 'but you were deeply insulted last night, and I fear me thou art as deeply avenged this morning. Where is the chaplain?'

'What mean you by hints so dark, and a question so sudden? The chaplain, as you well know, is absent at Perth upon an assembly of the brethren.'

'I care not,' answered the steward; 'he is but a priest of Baal.'

'Dryfesdale,' said the lady, sternly, 'what meanest thou? I have ever heard that in the Low Countries thou didst herd with the Anabaptist preachers — those bears which tear up the vintage. But the ministry which suits me and my house must content my retainers.'

'I would I had good ghostly counsel, though,' replied the steward, not attending to his mistress's rebuke, and seeming to speak to himself. 'This woman of Moab —'

'Speak of her with reverence,' said the lady: 'she is a king's daughter.'

'Be it so,' replied Dryfesdale; 'she goes where there is little difference betwixt her and a beggar's child. Mary of Scotland is dying.'

'Dying, and in my castle!' said the lady, starting up in alarm; 'of what disease, or by what accident?'

'Bear patience, lady. The ministry was mine.'

'Thine, villain and traitor! how didst thou dare —'

'I heard you insulted, lady — I heard you demand vengeance; I promised you should have it, and I now bring tidings of it.'

'Dryfesdale, I trust thou ravest?' said the lady.

'I rave not,' replied the steward. 'That which was written of me a million of years ere I saw the light must be executed by me. She hath that in her veins that, I fear me, will soon stop the springs of life.'

'Cruel villain,' exclaimed the lady, 'thou hast not poisoned her?'

'And if I had,' said Dryfesdale, 'what does it so greatly merit? Men bane vermin; why not rid them of their enemies so? In Italy they will do it for a cruizedor.'

'Cowardly ruffian, begone from my sight!'

'Think better of my zeal, lady,' said the steward, 'and judge not without looking around you. Lindesay, Ruthven, and your kinsman Morton poniarded Rizzio, and yet you now see no blood on their embroidery; the Lord Semple stabbed

the Lord of Sanquhar — does his bonnet sit a jot more awry on his brow? What noble lives in Scotland who has not had a share, for policy or revenge, in some such dealing? And who imputes it to them? Be not cheated with names: a dagger or a draught work to the same end, and are little unlike — a glass phial imprisons the one, and a leathern sheath the other; one deals with the brain, the other sluices the blood. Yet, I say not I gave aught to this lady.'

'What dost thou mean by thus dallying with me?' said the lady; 'as thou wouldst save thy neck from the rope it merits, tell me the whole truth of this story; thou hast long been known a dangerous man.'

'Ay, in my master's service I can be cold and sharp as my sword. Be it known to you that, when last on shore, I consulted with a woman of skill and power, called Nicneven, of whom the country has rung for some brief time past. Fools asked her for charms to make them beloved, misers for means to increase their store; some demanded to know the future — an idle wish, since it cannot be altered; others would have an explanation of the past — idler still, since it cannot be recalled. I heard their queries with scorn, and demanded the means of avenging myself of a deadly enemy, for I grow old, and may trust no longer to Bilboa blade. She gave me a packet. "Mix that," said she, "with any liquid, and thy vengeance is complete."

'Villain! and you mixed it with the food of this imprisoned lady, to the dishonour of thy master's house?'

'To redeem the insulted honour of my master's house, I mixed the contents of the packet with the jar of succory water. They seldom fail to drain it, and the woman loves it over all.'

'It was a work of hell,' said the Lady Lochleven, 'both the asking and the granting. Away, wretched man, let us see if aid be yet too late!'

'They will not admit us, madam, save we enter by force. I have been twice at the door, but can obtain no entrance.'

'We will beat it level with the ground, if needful. And hold — summon Randal hither instantly. Randal, here is a foul and evil chance befallen; send off a boat instantly to Kinross — the chamberlain Luke Lundin is said to have skill. Fetch off, too, that foul witch Nicneven; she shall first counteract her own spell, and then be burned to ashes in the island of St. Serf. Away — away. Tell them to hoist sail and ply oar, as ever they would have good of the Douglas's hand!'

'Mother Nicneven will not be lightly found, or fetched hither on these conditions,' answered Dryfesdale.

'Then grant her full assurance of safety. Look to it, for thine own life must answer for this lady's recovery.'

'I might have guessed that,' said Dryfesdale, sullenly; 'but it is my comfort I have avenged mine own cause as well as yours. She hath scoffed and scripped at me, and encouraged her saucy minion of a page to ridicule my stiff gait and slow speech. I felt it borne in upon me that I was to be avenged on them.'

'Go to the western turret,' said the lady, 'and remain there in ward until we see how this gear will terminate. I know thy resolved disposition: thou wilt not attempt escape.'

'Not were the walls of the turret of egg-shells, and the lake sheeted with ice,' said Dryfesdale. 'I am well taught, and strong in belief that man does nought of himself; he is but the foam on the billow, which rises, bubbles, and bursts, not by its own effort, but by the mightier impulse of fate which urges him. Yet, lady, if I may advise, amid this zeal for the life of the Jezebel of Scotland, forget not what is due to thine own honour, and keep the matter secret as you may.'

So saying, the gloomy fatalist turned from her, and stalked off with sullen composure to the place of confinement allotted to him.

His lady caught at his last hint, and only expressed her fear that the prisoner had partaken of some unwholesome food, and was dangerously ill. The castle was soon alarmed and in confusion. Randal was despatched to the shore to fetch off Lundin, with such remedies as could counteract poison; and with farther instructions to bring Mother Nicneven, if she could be found, with full power to pledge the Lady of Lochleven's word for her safety.

Meanwhile, the Lady of Lochleven herself held parley at the door of the Queen's apartment, and in vain urged the page to undo it.

'Foolish boy!' she said, 'thine own life and thy lady's are at stake. Open, I say, or we will cause the door to be broken down.'

'I may not open the door without my royal mistress's orders,' answered Roland. 'She has been very ill, and now she slumbers; if you wake her by using violence, let the consequence be on you and your followers.'

'Was ever woman in a strait so fearful!' exclaimed the Lady

of Lochleven. 'At least, thou rash boy, beware that no one tastes the food, but especially the jar of succory water.'

She then hastened to the turret, where Dryfesdale had composedly resigned himself to imprisonment. She found him reading, and demanded of him, 'Was thy fell potion of speedy operation?'

'Slow,' answered the steward. 'The hag asked me which I chose; I told her I loved a slow and sure revenge. "Revenge," said I, "is the highest-flavoured draught which man tastes upon earth, and he should sip it by little and little, not drain it up greedily at once."'

'Against whom, unhappy man, couldst thou nourish so fell a revenge?'

'I had many objects, but the chief was that insolent page.'

'The boy! thou inhuman man,' exclaimed the lady; 'what could he do to deserve thy malice?'

'He rose in your favour, and you graced him with your commissions — that was one thing. He rose in that of George Douglas also — that was another. He was the favourite of the Calvinistic Henderson, who hated me because my spirit disowns a separated priesthood. The Moabitish Queen held him dear — winds from each opposing point blew in his favour; the old servitor of your house was held lightly among ye; above all, from the first time I saw his face, I longed to destroy him.'

'What fiend have I nurtured in my house!' replied the lady. 'May God forgive me the sin of having given thee food and raiment!'

'You might not choose, lady,' answered the steward. 'Long ere this castle was builded — ay, long ere the islet which sustains it reared its head above the blue water — I was destined to be your faithful slave, and you to be my ungrateful mistress. Remember you not when I plunged amid the victorious French, in the time of this lady's mother, and brought off your husband, when those who had hung at the same breasts with him dared not attempt the rescue? Remember how I plunged into the lake when your grandson's skiff was overtaken by the tempest, boarded, and steered her safe to the land. Lady, the servant of a Scottish baron is he who regards not his own life or that of any other, save his master. And, for the death of the woman, I had tried the potion on her sooner, had not Master George been her taster. Her death — would it not be the happiest news that Scotland ever heard? Is she not of the bloody Guisian stock, whose sword was so often red with the blood of God's

saints? Is she not the daughter of the wretched tyrant James, whom Heaven cast down from his kingdom and his pride, even as the king of Babylon was smitten?

'Peace, villain!' said the lady, a thousand varied recollections thronging on her mind at the mention of her royal lover's name — 'peace, and disturb not the ashes of the dead — of the royal, of the unhappy dead. Read thy Bible; and may God grant thee to avail thyself better of its contents than thou hast yet done!' She departed hastily, and as she reached the next apartment, the tears rose in her eyes so hastily that she was compelled to stop and use her kerchief to dry them. 'I expected not this,' she said, 'no more than to have drawn water from the hard flint, or sap from a withered tree. I saw with a dry eye the apostasy and shame of George Douglas — the hope of my son's house, the child of my love; and yet I now weep for him who has so long lain in his grave — for him to whom I owe it that his daughter can make a scoffing and a jest of my name! But she is *his* daughter; my heart, hardened against her for so many causes, relents when a glance of her eye places her father unexpectedly before me; and as often her likeness to that true daughter of the house of Guise, her detested mother, has again confirmed my resolution. But she must not — must not die in my house, and by so foul a practice. Thank God, the operation of the potion is slow, and may be counteracted! I will to her apartment once more. But Oh! that hardened villain, whose fidelity we held in such esteem, and had such high proof of! What miracle can unite so much wickedness and so much truth in one bosom!'

The Lady of Lochleven was not aware how far minds of a certain gloomy and determined cast by nature may be warped by a keen sense of petty injuries and insults, combining with the love of gain, and sense of self-interest, and amalgamated with the crude, wild, and indigested fanatical opinions which this man had gathered among the crazy sectaries of Germany; or how far the doctrines of fatalism, which he had embraced so decidedly, sear the human conscience, by representing our actions as the result of inevitable necessity.

During her visit to the prisoner, Roland had communicated to Catherine the tenor of the conversation he had had with her at the door of the apartment. The quick intelligence of that lively maiden instantly comprehended the outline of what was believed to have happened, but her prejudices hurried her beyond the truth.

'They meant to have poisoned us,' she exclaimed in horror, 'and there stands the fatal liquor which should have done the deed! Ay, as soon as Douglas ceased to be our taster, our food was likely to be fatally seasoned. Thou, Roland, who shouldst have made the essay, wert readily doomed to die with us. Oh, dearest Lady Fleming, pardon — pardon for the injuries I said to you in my anger: your words were prompted by Heaven to save our lives, and especially that of the injured Queen. But what have we now to do? That old crocodile of the lake will be presently back to shed her hypocritical tears over our dying agonies. Lady Fleming, what shall we do?'

'Our Lady help us in our need!' she replied; 'how should I tell, unless we were to make our plaint to the Regent?'

'Make our plaint to the devil,' said Catherine, impatiently, 'and accuse his dam at the foot of his burning throne! The Queen still sleeps; we must gain time. The poisoning hag must not know her scheme has miscarried; the old envenomed spider has but too many ways of mending her broken web. The jar of succory water,' said she — 'Roland, if thou be'st a man, help me: empty the jar on the chimney or from the window; make such waste among the viands as if we had made our usual meal, and leave the fragments on cup and porringer, but taste nothing as thou lovest thy life. I will sit by the Queen, and tell her, at her waking, in what a fearful pass we stand. Her sharp wit and ready spirit will teach us what is best to be done. Meanwhile, till further notice, observe, Roland, that the Queen is in a state of torpor; that Lady Fleming is indisposed — that character (speaking in a lower tone) will suit her best, and save her wits some labour in vain. I am not so much indisposed, thou understandest.'

'And I?' said the page —

'You!' replied Catherine, 'you are quite well; who thinks it worth while to poison puppy-dogs or pages?'

'Does this levity become the time?' asked the page.

'It does — it does,' answered Catherine Seyton; 'if the Queen approves, I see plainly how this disconcerted attempt may do us good service.'

She went to work while she spoke, eagerly assisted by Roland. The breakfast-table soon displayed the appearance as if the meal had been eaten as usual; and the ladies retired as softly as possible into the Queen's sleeping-apartment. At a new summons of the Lady Lochleven, the page undid the door, and admitted her into the ante-room, asking her pardon

for having withstood her, alleging in excuse that the Queen had fallen into a heavy slumber since she had broken her fast.

'She has eaten and drunken, then?' said the Lady of Lochleven.

'Surely,' replied the page, 'according to her Grace's ordinary custom, unless upon the fasts of the church.'

'The jar,' she said, hastily examining it, 'it is empty; drank the Lady Mary the whole of this water?'

'A large part, madam; and I heard the Lady Catherine Seyton jestingly upbraid the Lady Mary Fleming with having taken more than a just share of what remained, so that but little fell to her own lot.'

'And are they well in health?' said the Lady of Lochleven.

'Lady Fleming,' said the page, 'complains of lethargy, and looks duller than usual; and the Lady Catherine of Seyton feels her head somewhat more giddy than is her wont.'

He raised his voice a little as he said these words, to apprise the ladies of the part assigned to each of them, and not, perhaps, without the wish of conveying to the ears of Catherine the page-like jest which lurked in the allotment.

'I will enter the Queen's bedchamber,' said the Lady Lochleven; 'my business is express.'

As she advanced to the door, the voice of Catherine Seyton was heard from within. 'No one can enter here; the Queen sleeps.'

'I will not be controlled, young lady,' replied the Lady of Lochleven; 'there is, I wot, no inner bar, and I will enter in your despite.'

'There is, indeed, no inner bar,' answered Catherine, firmly, 'but there are the staples where that bar should be; and into those staples have I thrust mine arm, like an ancestress of your own, when, better employed than the Douglasses of our days, she thus defended the bedchamber of her sovereign against murderers. Try your force, then, and see whether a Seyton cannot rival in courage a maiden of the house of Douglas.'

'I dare not attempt the pass at such risk,' said the Lady of Lochleven. 'Strange, that this princess, with all that justly attaches to her as blameworthy, should preserve such empire over the minds of her attendants! Damsel, I give thee my honour that I come for the Queen's safety and advantage. Awaken her, if thou lovest her, and pray her leave that I may enter. I will retire from the door the whilst.'

'Thou wilt not awaken the Queen?' said the Lady Fleming.

'What choice have we?' said the ready-witted maiden, 'unless you deem it better to wait till the Lady Lochleven herself plays lady of the bedchamber. Her fit of patience will not last long, and the Queen must be prepared to meet her.'

'But thou wilt bring back her Grace's fit by thus disturbing her.'

'Heaven forbid!' replied Catherine; 'but if so, it must pass for an effect of the poison. I hope better things, and that the Queen will be able when she wakes to form her own judgment in this terrible crisis. Meanwhile, do thou, dear Lady Fleming, practise to look as dull and heavy as the alertness of thy spirit will permit.'

Catherine kneeled by the side of the Queen's bed, and, kissing her hand repeatedly, succeeded at last in awakening without alarming her. She seemed surprised to find that she was ready dressed, but sate up in her bed, and appeared so perfectly composed that Catherine Seyton, without farther preamble, judged it safe to inform her of the predicament in which they were placed. Mary turned pale, and crossed herself again and again, when she heard the imminent danger in which she had stood. But, like the Ulysses of Homer —

Hardly waking yet,
Sprung in her mind the momentary wit,

and she at once understood her situation, with the dangers and advantages that attended it.

'We cannot do better,' she said, after her hasty conference with Catherine, pressing her at the same time to her bosom, and kissing her forehead — 'we cannot do better than to follow the scheme so happily devised by thy quick wit and bold affection. Undo the door to the Lady Lochleven. She shall meet her match in art, though not in perfidy. Fleming, draw close the curtain, and get thee behind it — thou art a better tire-woman than an actress; do but breathe heavily, and, if thou wilt, groan slightly, and it will top thy part. Hark! they come. Now, Catherine of Medicis, may thy spirit inspire me, for a cold northern brain is too blunt for this scene!'

Ushered by Catherine Seyton, and stepping as light as she could, the Lady Lochleven was shown into the twilight apartment, and conducted to the side of the couch, where Mary pallid and exhausted from a sleepless night and the subsequent agitation of the morning, lay extended so listlessly as might well confirm the worst fears of her hostess.

'Now, God forgive us our sins!' said the Lady of Lochleven, forgetting her pride, and throwing herself on her knees by the side of the bed; 'it is too true — she is murdered!'

'Who is in the chamber?' said Mary, as if awaking from a heavy sleep. 'Seyton, Fleming, where are you? I heard a strange voice. Who waits? Call Courcelles.'

'Alas! her memory is at Holyrood, though her body is at Lochleven. Forgive, madam,' continued the lady, 'if I call your attention to me. I am Margaret Erskine, of the house of Mar, by marriage Lady Douglas of Lochleven.'

'Oh, our gentle hostess,' answered the Queen, 'who hath such care of our lodgings and of our diet. We cumber you too much and too long, good Lady of Lochleven; but we now trust your task of hospitality is wellnigh ended.'

'Her words go like a knife through my heart,' said the Lady of Lochleven. 'With a breaking heart, I pray your Grace to tell me what is your ailment, that aid may be had, if there be yet time!'

'Nay, my ailment,' replied the Queen, 'is nothing worth telling, or worth a leech's notice: my limbs feel heavy — my heart feels cold — a prisoner's limbs and heart are rarely otherwise. Fresh air, methinks, and freedom would soon revive me; but as the estates have ordered it, death alone can break my prison doors.'

'Were it possible, madam,' said the lady, 'that your liberty could restore your perfect health, I would myself encounter the resentment of the Regent — of my son, Sir William — of my whole friends, rather than you should meet your fate in this castle?'

'Alas! madam,' said the Lady Fleming, who conceived the time propitious to show that her own address had been held too lightly of; 'it is but trying what good freedom may work upon us; for myself, I think a free walk on the greensward would do me much good at heart.'

The Lady of Lochleven rose from the bedside, and darted a penetrating look at the elder valetudinary. 'Are you so evil-disposed, Lady Fleming?'

'Evil-disposed indeed, madam,' replied the court dame, 'and more especially since breakfast.'

'Help! — help!' exclaimed Catherine, anxious to break off a conversation which boded her schemes no good — 'help! I say — help! the Queen is about to pass away. Aid her, Lady Lochleven, if you be a woman!'

The lady hastened to support the Queen's head, who, turning her eyes towards her with an air of great languor, exclaimed, 'Thanks, my dearest Lady of Lochleven; notwithstanding some passages of late, I have never misconstrued or misdoubted your affection to our house. It was proved, as I have heard, before I was born.'

The Lady Lochleven sprung from the floor, on which she had again knelt, and having paced the apartment in great disorder, flung open the lattice, as if to get air.

'Now, Our Lady forgive me!' said Catherine to herself; 'how deep must the love of sarcasm be implanted in the breasts of us women, since the Queen, with all her sense, will risk ruin rather than rein in her wit!' She then adventured, stooping over the Queen's person, to press her arm with her hand, saying, at the same time, 'For God's sake, madam, restrain yourself!'

'Thou art too forward, maiden,' said the Queen; but immediately added, in a low whisper, 'Forgive me, Catherine; but when I felt the hag's murderous hands busy about my head and neck, I felt such disgust and hatred that I must have said something or died. But I will be schooled to better behaviour, only see that thou let her not touch me.'

'Now, God be praised!' said the Lady of Lochleven, withdrawing her head from the window, 'the boat comes as fast as sail and oar can send wood through water. It brings the leech and a female — certainly, from the appearance, the very person I was in quest of. Were she but well out of this castle, with our honour safe, I would that she were on the top of the wildest mountain in Norway; or I would I had been there myself, ere I had undertaken this trust!'

While she thus expressed herself, standing apart at one window, Roland Graeme, from the other, watched the boat bursting through the waters of the lake, which glided from its side in ripple and in foam. He, too, became sensible that at the stern was seated the medical chamberlain, clad in his black velvet cloak; and that his own relative, Magdalen Graeme, in her assumed character of Mother Nicneven, stood in the bow, her hands clasped together, and pointed towards the castle, and her attitude, even at that distance, expressing enthusiastic eagerness to arrive at the landing-place. They arrived there accordingly; and while the supposed witch was detained in a room beneath, the physician was ushered to the Queen's apartment, which he entered with all due professional solemnity. Catherine had, in the meanwhile, fallen back from the Queen's

bed, and taken an opportunity to whisper to Roland, 'Methinks, from the information of the threadbare velvet cloak and the solemn beard, there would be little trouble in haltering yonder ass. But thy grandmother, Roland — thy grandmother's zeal will ruin us, if she get not a hint to dissemble.'

Roland, without reply, glided towards the door of the apartment, crossed the parlour, and safely entered the ante-chamber; but when he attempted to pass farther, the word 'Back! Back!' echoed from one to the other by two men armed with carabines, convinced him that the Lady of Lochleven's suspicions had not, even in the midst of her alarms, been so far lulled to sleep as to omit the precaution of stationing sentinels on her prisoners. He was compelled, therefore, to return to the parlour, or audience chamber, in which he found the lady of the castle in conference with her learned leech.

'A truce with your cant phrase and your solemn foppery, Lundin,' in such terms she accosted the man of art, 'and let me know instantly, if thou canst tell, whether this lady hath swallowed aught that is less than wholesome.'

'Nay, but, good lady — honoured patroness — to whom I am alike bondsman in my medical and official capacity, deal reasonably with me. If this, mine illustrious patient, will not answer a question, saving with sighs and moans; if that other honourable lady will do nought but yawn in my face when I inquire after the diagnostics; and if that other young damsel, who I profess is a comely maiden —'

'Talk not to me of comeliness or of damsels,' said the Lady of Lochleven; 'I say, are they evil-disposed? In one word, man, have they taken poison — ay or no?'

'Poisons, madam,' said the learned leech, 'are of various sorts. There is your animal poison, as the *Lepus marinus*, as mentioned by Dioscorides and Galen; there are mineral and semi-mineral poisons, as those compounded of sublimate regulus of antimony, vitriol, and the arsenical salts; there are your poisons from herbs and vegetables, as the aqua cymbalariae, opium, aconitum, cantharides, and the like; there are also —'

'Now, out upon thee for a learned fool! And I myself am no better for expecting an oracle from such a log,' said the lady.

'Nay, but if your ladyship will have patience. If I knew what food they have partaken of, or could see but the remnants of what they have last eaten; for as to the external and internal

symptoms, I can discover nought like ; for, as Galen saith in his second book *De Antidotis* —

‘Away, fool!’ said the lady ; ‘send me that hag hither ; she shall avouch what it was that she hath given to the wretch Dryfesdale, or the pilniewinks and thumbikins shall wrench it out of her finger-joints!’

‘Art hath no enemy unless the ignorant,’ said the mortified doctor ; veiling, however, his remark under the Latin version, and stepping apart into a corner to watch the result.

In a minute or two Magdalen Græme entered the apartment, dressed as we have described her at the revel, but with her muffler thrown back, and all affectation of disguise. She was attended by two guards, of whose presence she did not seem even to be conscious, and who followed her with an air of embarrassment and timidity, which was probably owing to their belief in her supernatural power, coupled with the effect produced by her bold and undaunted demeanour. She confronted the Lady of Lochleven, who seemed to endure with high disdain the confidence of her air and manner.

‘Wretched woman!’ said the lady, after essaying for a moment to bear her down, before she addressed her, by the stately severity of her look, ‘what was that powder which thou didst give to a servant of this house, by name Jasper Dryfesdale, that he might work out with it some slow and secret vengeance? Confess its nature and properties, or, by the honour of Douglas, I give thee to fire and stake before the sun is lower!’

‘Alas!’ said Magdalen Græme in reply, ‘and when became a Douglas or a Douglas’s man so unfurnished of his means of revenge that he should seek them at the hands of a poor and solitary woman? The towers in which your captives pine away into unpitied graves yet stand fast on their foundation ; the crimes wrought in them have not yet burst their vaults asunder ; your men have still their cross-bows, pistolets, and daggers ; why need you seek to herbs or charms for the execution of your revenges?’

‘Hear me, foul hag,’ said the Lady of Lochleven — ‘but what avails speaking to thee? Bring Dryfesdale hither, and let them be confronted together.’

‘You may spare your retainers the labour,’ replied Magdalen Græme. ‘I came not here to be confronted with a base groom, nor to answer the interrogatories of James’s heretical leman. I came to speak with the Queen of Scotland. Give place there!’

And while the Lady of Lochleven stood confounded at her boldness, and at the reproach she had cast upon her, Magdalen Græme strode past her into the bedchamber of the Queen, and, kneeling on the floor, made a salutation as if, in the Oriental fashion, she meant to touch the earth with her forehead.

'Hail, Princess!' she said — 'hail, daughter of many a king, but graced above them all in that thou art called to suffer for the true faith! — hail to thee, the pure gold of whose crown has been tried in the seven-times-heated furnace of affliction — hear the comfort which God and Our Lady send thee by the mouth of thy unworthy servant. But first ——' and stooping her head she crossed herself repeatedly, and, still upon her knees, appeared to be rapidly reciting some formula of devotion.

'Seize her and drag her to the massymore! To the deepest dungeon with the sorceress, whose master, the devil, could alone have inspired her with boldness enough to insult the mother of Douglas in his own castle!' Thus spoke the incensed Lady of Lochleven.

But the physician presumed to interpose. 'I pray of you, honoured madam, she be permitted to take her course without interruption. Peradventure we shall learn something concerning the nostrum she hath ventured, contrary to law and the rules of art, to adhibit to these ladies, through the medium of the steward Dryfesdale.'

'For a fool,' replied the Lady of Lochleven, 'thou hast counselled wisely. I will bridle my resentment till their conference be over.'

'God forbid, honoured lady,' said Doctor Lundin, 'that you should suppress it longer — nothing may more endanger the frame of your honoured body; and truly, if there be witchcraft in this matter, it is held by the vulgar, and even by solid authors on demonology, that three scruples of the ashes of the witch, when she hath been well and carefully burned at a stake, is a grand catholicon in such matter, even as they prescribe *crinis canis rabidi* — a hair of the dog that bit the patient — in cases of hydrophobia. I warrant neither treatment, being out of the regular practice of the schools; but, in the present case, there can be little harm in trying the conclusion upon this old necromancer and quacksilver: *fiat experimentum*, as we say, *in corpore vili*.'

'Peace, fool!' said the lady, 'she is about to speak.'

At that moment Magdalen Græme arose from her knees, and

turned her countenance on the Queen, at the same time advancing her foot, extending her arm, and assuming the mien and attitude of a sibyl in frenzy. As her grey hair floated back from beneath her coif, and her eye gleamed fire from under its shaggy eyebrow, the effect of her expressive, though emaciated, features was heightened by an enthusiasm approaching to insanity, and her appearance struck with awe all who were present. Her eyes for a time glanced wildly around, as if seeking for something to aid her in collecting her powers of expression, and her lips had a nervous and quivering motion, as those of one who would fain speak, yet rejects as inadequate the words which present themselves. Mary herself caught the infection as if by a sort of magnetic influence, and raising herself from her bed, without being able to withdraw her eyes from those of Magdalen, waited as if for the oracle of a pythoness. She waited not long; for no sooner had the enthusiast collected herself than her gaze became intensely steady, her features assumed a determined energy, and when she began to speak the words flowed from her with a profuse fluency which might have passed for inspiration, and which, perhaps, she herself mistook for such.

'Arise,' she said, 'Queen of France and of England! Arise, lioness of Scotland, and be not dismayed, though the nets of the hunters have encircled thee! Stoop not to feign with the false ones, whom thou shalt soon meet in the field. The issue of battle is with the God of armies, but by battle thy cause shall be tried. Lay aside, then, the arts of lower mortals, and assume those which become a queen! True defender of the only true faith, the armoury of Heaven is open to thee! Faithful daughter of the church, take the keys of St. Peter, to bind and to loose! Royal Princess of the land, take the sword of St. Paul, to smite and to shear! There is darkness in thy destiny; but not in these towers, not under the rule of their haughty mistress, shall that destiny be closed. In other lands the lioness may crouch to the power of the tigress, but not in her own: not in Scotland shall the Queen of Scotland long remain captive; nor is the fate of the royal Stuart in the hands of the traitor Douglas. Let the Lady of Lochleven double her bolts and deepen her dungeons, they shall not retain thee. Each element shall give thee its assistance ere thou shalt continue captive: the land shall lend its earthquakes, the water its waves, the air its tempests, the fire its devouring flames, to desolate this house, rather than it shall continue the place of

thy captivity. Hear this and tremble, all ye who fight against the light, for she says it to whom it hath been assured !'

She was silent, and the astonished physician said, 'If there was ever an *energumene*, or possessed demoniac, in our days, there is a devil speaking with that woman's tongue !'

'Practice,' said the Lady of Lochleven, recovering her surprise — 'here is all practice and imposture. To the dungeon with her !'

'Lady of Lochleven,' said Mary, arising from her bed, and coming forward with her wonted dignity, 'ere you make arrest on any one in our presence, hear me but one word. I have done you some wrong : I believed you privy to the murderous purpose of your vassal, and I deceived you in suffering you to believe it had taken effect. I did you wrong, Lady of Lochleven, for I perceive your purpose to aid me was sincere. We tasted not of the liquid, nor are we now sick, save that we languish for our freedom.'

'It is avowed like Mary of Scotland,' said Magdalen Graeme ; 'and know, besides, that had the Queen drained the draught to the dregs, it was harmless as the water from a sainted spring. 'Trow ye, proud woman,' she added, addressing herself to the Lady of Lochleven, 'that I — I — would have been the wretch to put poison in the hands of a servant or vassal of the house of Lochleven, knowing whom that house contained ? as soon would I have furnished drug to slay my own daughter !'

'Am I thus bearded in mine own castle ?' said the lady ; 'to the dungeon with her ! She shall abye what is due to the vender of poisons and practiser of witchcraft.'

'Yet hear me for an instant, Lady of Lochleven,' said Mary ; 'and do you,' to Magdalen, 'be silent at my command. Your steward, lady, has by confession attempted my life and those of my household, and this woman hath done her best to save them, by furnishing him with what was harmless, in place of the fatal drugs which he expected. Methinks I propose to you but a fair exchange when I say I forgive your vassal with all my heart, and leave vengeance to God and to his conscience, so that you also forgive the boldness of this woman in your presence ; for we trust you do not hold it as a crime that she substituted an innocent beverage for the mortal poison which was to have drenched our cup ?'

'Heaven forefend, madam,' said the lady, 'that I should account that a crime which saved the house of Douglas from a foul breach of honour and hospitality ! We have written to our

son touching our vassal's delict, and he must abide his doom, which will most likely be death. Touching this woman, her trade is damnable by Scripture, and is mortally punished by the wise laws of our ancestry : she also must abide her doom.'

'And have I then,' said the Queen, 'no claim on the house of Lochleven for the wrong I have so nearly suffered within their walls? I ask but in requital the life of a frail and aged woman, whose brain, as yourself may judge, seems somewhat affected by years and suffering.'

'If the Lady Mary,' replied the inflexible Lady of Lochleven, 'hath been menaced with wrong in the house of Douglas, it may be regarded as some compensation that her complots have cost that house the exile of a valued son.'

'Plead no more for me, my gracious sovereign,' said Magdalen Graeme, 'nor abase yourself to ask so much as a grey hair of my head at her hands. I knew the risk at which I served my church and my queen, and was ever prompt to pay my poor life as the ransom. It is a comfort to think that in slaying me, or in restraining my freedom, or even in injuring that single grey hair, the house whose honour she boasts so highly will have filled up the measure of their shame by the breach of their solemn written assurance of safety.' And taking from her bosom a paper, she handed it to the Queen.

'It is a solemn assurance of safety in life and limb,' said Queen Mary, 'with space to come and go, under the hand and seal of the chamberlain of Kinross, granted to Magdalen Graeme, commonly called Mother Nicneven, in consideration of her consenting to put herself, for the space of twenty-four hours, if required, within the iron gate of the Castle of Lochleven.'

'Knave!' said the lady, turning to the chamberlain, 'how dared you grant her such a protection?'

'It was by your ladyship's orders, transmitted by Randal, as he can bear witness,' replied Doctor Lundin; 'nay, I am only like the pharmacopolist, who compounds the drugs after the order of the mediciner.'

'I remember—I remember,' answered the lady; 'but I meant the assurance only to be used in case, by residing in another jurisdiction, she could not have been apprehended under our warrant.'

'Nevertheless,' said the Queen, 'the Lady of Lochleven is bound by the action of her deputy in granting the assurance.'

'Madam,' replied the lady, 'the house of Douglas have

never broken their safe-conduct, and never will : too deeply did they suffer by such a breach of trust, exercised on themselves, when your Grace's ancestor, the second James, in defiance of the rights of hospitality, and of his own written assurance of safety, poniarded the brave Earl of Douglas with his own hand, and within two yards of the social board at which he had just before sat the King of Scotland's honoured guest.

'Methinks,' said the Queen, carelessly, 'in consideration of so very recent and enormous a tragedy, which I think only chanced some six-score years ago, the Douglasses should have shown themselves less tenacious of the company of their sovereigns than you, Lady of Lochleven, seem to be of mine.'

'Let Randal,' said the lady, 'take the bag back to Kinross, and set her at full liberty, discharging her from our bounds in future, on peril of her head. And let your wisdom (to the chamberlain) keep her company. And fear not for your character, though I send you in such company ; for, granting her to be a witch, it would be a waste of fagots to burn you for a wizard.'

The crestfallen chamberlain was preparing to depart ; but Magdalen Graeme, collecting herself, was about to reply, when the Queen interposed, saying, 'Good mother, we heartily thank you for your unfeigned zeal towards our person, and pray you, as our liege woman, that you abstain from whatever may lead you into personal danger ; and, further, it is our will that you depart without a word of farther parley with any one in this castle. For thy present guerdon, take this small reliquary ; it was given to us by our uncle the Cardinal, and hath had the benediction of the Holy Father himself ; and now depart in peace and in silence. For you, learned sir,' continued the Queen, advancing to the doctor, who made his reverence in a manner doubly embarrassed, by the awe of the Queen's presence, which made him fear to do too little, and by the apprehension of his lady's displeasure, in case he should chance to do too much — 'for you, learned sir, as it was not your fault, though surely our own good fortune, that we did not need your skill at this time, it would not become us, however circumstanced, to suffer our leech to leave us without such guerdon as we can offer.'

With these words, and with the grace which never forsook her, though, in the present case, there might lurk under it a little gentle ridicule, she offered a small embroidered purse to

the chamberlain, who, with extended hand and arched back, his learned face stooping until a physiognomist might have practised the metoposcopical science upon it, as seen from behind betwixt his gambadoes, was about to accept of the professional recompense offered by so fair as well as illustrious a hand. But the lady interposed, and, regarding the chamberlain, said aloud, 'No servant of our house, without instantly relinquishing that character, and incurring withal our highest displeasure, shall dare receive any gratuity at the hand of the Lady Mary.'

Sadly and slowly the chamberlain raised his depressed stature into the perpendicular attitude, and left the apartment dejectedly, followed by Magdalen Græme, after, with mute but expressive gesture, she had kissed the reliquary with which the Queen had presented her, and raising her clasped hands and uplifted eyes towards Heaven, had seemed to entreat a benediction upon the royal dame. As she left the castle, and went towards the quay where the boat lay, Roland Græme, anxious to communicate with her if possible, threw himself in her way, and might have succeeded in exchanging a few words with her, as she was guarded only by the dejected chamberlain and his halberdiers, but she seemed to have taken, in its most strict and literal acceptation, the command to be silent which she had received from the Queen; for, to the repeated signs of her grandson, she only replied by laying her finger on her lip.

Doctor Lundin was not so reserved. Regret for the handsome gratuity, and for the compulsory task of self-denial imposed on him, had grieved the spirit of that worthy officer and learned mediciner. 'Even thus, my friend,' said he, squeezing the page's hand as he bade him farewell, 'is merit rewarded. I came to cure this unhappy lady; and I profess she well deserves the trouble, for, say what they will of her, she hath a most winning manner, a sweet voice, a gracious smile, and a most majestic wave of her hand. If she was not poisoned, say, my dear Master Roland, was that fault of mine, I being ready to cure her if she had? and now I am denied the permission to accept my well-earned honorarium. O Galen! O Hippocrates! is the graduate's cap and doctor's scarlet brought to this pass? *Frustra fatigamus remediis ægros!*'

He wiped his eyes, stepped on the gunwale, and the boat pushed off from the shore, and went merrily across the lake, which was dimpled by the summer wind.¹

¹ See Supposed Conspiracy against the Life of Mary. Note 22.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Death distant ? No alas ! he's ever with us,
And shakes the dart at us in all our actings :
He lurks within our cup, while we're in health ;
Sits by our sick-bed, mocks our medicines ;
We cannot walk, or sit, or ride, or travel,
But Death is by to seize us when he lists.

The Spanish Father.

FROM the agitating scene in the Queen's presence-chamber, the Lady of Lochleven retreated to her own apartment, and ordered the steward to be called before her.

'Have they not disarmed thee, Dryfesdale ?' she said, on seeing him enter, accoutred, as usual, with sword and dagger.

'No !' replied the old man ; 'how should they ? Your ladyship, when you commanded me to ward, said nought of laying down my arms ; and, I think, none of your menials, without your order or your son's, dare approach Jasper Dryfesdale for such a purpose. Shall I now give up my sword to you ? It is worth little now, for it has fought for your house till it is worn down to old iron, like the panther's old chipping knife.'

'You have attempted a deadly crime — poison under trust.'

'Under trust — hem ! I know not what your ladyship thinks of it, but the world without thinks the trust was given you even for that very end ; and you would have been well off had it been so ended as I proposed, and you neither the worse nor the wiser.'

'Wretch !' exclaimed the lady, 'and fool as well as villain, who could not even execute the crime he had planned !'

'I bid as fair for it as man could,' replied Dryfesdale. 'I went to a woman — a witch and a Papist. If I found not poison, it was because it was otherwise predestined. I tried fair for it ; but the half-done job may be clouted, if you will.'

'Villain ! I am even now about to send off an express messenger to my son, to take order how thou shouldst be disposed of. Prepare thyself for death, if thou canst.'

'He that looks on death, lady,' answered Dryfesdale, 'as that which he may not shun, and which has its own fixed and certain hour, is ever prepared for it. He that is hanged in May will eat no flaunes¹ in midsummer — so there is the moan made for the old serving-man. But whom, pray I, send you on so fair an errand ?'

'There will be no lack of messengers,' answered his mistress.

'By my hand, but there will,' replied the old man : 'your castle is but poorly manned, considering the watches that you must keep, having this charge. There is the warder and two others whom you discarded for tampering with Master George ; then for the warder's tower, the bailie, the donjon — five men mount each guard, and the rest must sleep for the most part in their clothes. To send away an old man were to harass the sentinels to death — unthrifty misuse for a household. To take in new soldiers were dangerous, the charge requiring tried men. I see but one thing for it : I will do your errand to Sir William Douglas myself.'

'That were indeed a resource ! And on what day within twenty years would it be done ?' said the lady.

'Even with the speed of man and horse,' said Dryfesdale ; 'for though I care not much about the latter days of an old serving-man's life, yet I would like to know as soon as may be whether my neck is mine own or the hangman's.'

'Holdest thou thy own life so lightly ?' said the lady.

'Else I had wrecked more of that of others,' said the predestinarian. 'What is death ? it is but ceasing to live. And what is living ? a weary return of light and darkness, sleeping and waking, being hungered and eating. Your dead man needs neither candle nor can, neither fire nor feather-bed ; and the joiner's chest serves him for an eternal frieze jerkin.'

'Wretched man ! believest thou not that after death comes the judgment ?'

'Lady,' answered Dryfesdale, 'as my mistress, I may not dispute your words ; but, as spiritually speaking, you are still but a burner of bricks in Egypt, ignorant of the freedom of the saints ; for, as was well shown to me by that gifted man, Nicolaus Schöfferbach, who was martyred by the bloody bishop of Münster, he cannot sin who doth but execute that which is predestined, since —'

'Silence !' said the lady, interrupting him. 'Answer me not with thy bold and presumptuous blasphemy, but hear me. Thou hast been long the servant of our house —'

¹ Pancakes.

'The born servant of the Douglas ; they have had the best of me : I served them since I left Lockerbie. I was then ten years old, and you may soon add the threescore to it.'

'Thy foul attempt has miscarried, so thou art guilty only in intention. It were a deserved deed to hang thee on the warder's tower ; and yet, in thy present mind, it were but giving a soul to Satan. I take thine offer, then. Go hence ; here is my packet ; I will add to it but a line, to desire him to send me a faithful servant or two to complete the garrison. Let my son deal with you as he will. If thou art wise, thou wilt make for Lockerbie so soon as thy foot touches dry land, and let the packet find another bearer ; at all rates, look it miscarries not.'

'Nay, madam,' replied he, 'I was born, as I said, the Douglas's servant, and I will be no corbie-messenger in mine old age : your message to your son shall be done as truly by me as if it concerned another man's neck. I take my leave of your honour.'

The lady issued her commands, and the old man was ferried over to the shore, to proceed on his extraordinary pilgrimage. It is necessary the reader should accompany him on his journey, which Providence had determined should not be of long duration.

On arriving at the village, the steward, although his disgrace had transpired, was readily accommodated with a horse, by the chamberlain's authority ; and the roads being by no means esteemed safe, he associated himself with Auchtermuchty, the common carrier, in order to travel in his company to Edinburgh.

The worthy waggoner, according to the established custom of all carriers, stage-coachmen, and other persons in public authority, from the earliest days to the present, never wanted good reasons for stopping upon the road as often as he would ; and the place which had most captivation for him as a resting-place was a change-house, as it was termed, not very distant from a romantic dell, well known by the name of Keiry Craigs. Attractions of a kind very different from those which arrested the progress of John Auchtermuchty and his wains still continued to hover round this romantic spot, and none has visited its vicinity without a desire to remain long and to return soon.

Arrived near his favourite 'howff,' not all the authority of Dryfesdale, much diminished indeed by the rumours of his disgrace, could prevail on the carrier, obstinate as the brutes which he drove, to pass on without his accustomed halt, for

which the distance he had travelled furnished little or no pretence. Old Keltie, the landlord, who has bestowed his name on a bridge in the neighbourhood of his quondam dwelling, received the carrier with his usual festive cordiality, and adjourned with him into the house, under pretence of important business, which, I believe, consisted in their emptying together a mutchkin stoup of usquebaugh. While the worthy host and his guest were thus employed, the discarded steward, with a double portion of moroseness in his gesture and look, walked discontentedly into the kitchen of the place, which was occupied but by one guest. The stranger was a slight figure, scarce above the age of boyhood, and in the dress of a page, but bearing an air of haughty aristocratic boldness, and even insolence, in his look and manner that might have made Dryfesdale conclude he had pretensions to superior rank, had not his experience taught him how frequently these airs of superiority were assumed by the domestics and military retainers of the Scottish nobility. 'The pilgrim's morning to you, old sir,' said the youth; 'you come, as I think, from Lochleven Castle. What news of our bonny Queen? A fairer dove was never pent up in so wretched a dovecot!'

'They that speak of Lochleven, and of those whom its walls contain,' answered Dryfesdale, 'speak of what concerns the Douglas; and they who speak of what concerns the Douglas do it at their peril.'

'Do you speak from fear of them, old man, or would you make a quarrel for them? I should have deemed your age might have cooled your blood.'

'Never, while there are empty-pated coxcombs at each corner to keep it warm.'

'The sight of thy grey hairs keeps mine cold,' said the boy, who had risen up and now sat down again.

'It is well for thee, or I had cooled it with this holly rod,' replied the steward. 'I think thou be'st one of those swash-bucklers, who brawl in ale-houses and taverns; and who, if words were pikes, and oaths were Andrew Ferraras, would soon place the religion of Babylon in the land once more, and the woman of Moab upon the throne.'

'Now, by St. Bennet of Seyton,' said the youth, 'I will strike thee on the face, thou foul-mouthed old railing heretic!'

'St. Bennet of Seyton!' echoed the steward; 'a proper warrant is St. Bennet's, and for a proper nest of wolf-birds like the Seytons! I will arrest thee as a traitor to King James

and the good Regent. Ho! John Auchtermuchty, raise aid against the king's traitor!

So saying, he laid his hand on the youth's collar, and drew his sword. John Auchtermuchty looked in, but, seeing the naked weapon, ran faster out than he entered. Keltie, the landlord, stood by and helped neither party, only exclaiming, 'Gentlemen! — gentlemen! for the love of Heaven!' and so forth. A struggle ensued, in which the young man, chafed at Dryfesdale's boldness, and unable, with the ease he expected, to extricate himself from the old man's determined grasp, drew his dagger, and, with the speed of light, dealt him three wounds in the breast and body, the least of which was mortal. The old man sunk on the ground with a deep groan, and the host set up a piteous exclamation of surprise.

'Peace, ye bawling hound!' said the wounded steward; 'are dagger-stabs and dying men such rarities in Scotland that you should cry as if the house were falling? Youth, I do not forgive thee, for there is nought betwixt us to forgive. Thou hast done what I have done to more than one; and I suffer what I have seen them suffer: it was all ordained to be thus and not otherwise. But if thou wouldst do me right, thou wilt send this packet safely to the hands of Sir William Douglas; and see that my memory suffer not, as if I would have loitered on mine errand for fear of my life.'

The youth, whose passion had subsided the instant he had done the deed, listened with sympathy and attention, when another person, muffled in his cloak, entered the apartment, and exclaimed — 'Good God! Dryfesdale, and expiring!'

'Ay, and Dryfesdale would that he had been dead,' answered the wounded man, 'rather than that his ears had heard the words of the only Douglas that ever was false; but yet it is better as it is. Good my murderer, and the rest of you, stand back a little, and let me speak with this unhappy apostate. Kneel down by me, Master George. You have heard that I failed in my attempt to take away that Moabitish stumbling-block and her retinue? I gave them that which I thought would have removed the temptation out of thy path; and this, though I had other reasons to show to thy mother and others, I did chiefly purpose for love of thee.'

'For the love of me, base poisoner!' answered Douglas, 'wouldst thou have committed so horrible, so unprovoked a murder, and mentioned my name with it?'

'And wherefore not, George of Douglas?' answered Dryfes-

dale, 'Breath is now scarce with me, but I would spend my last gasp on this argument. Hast thou not, despite the honour thou owest to thy parents, the faith that is due to thy religion, the truth that is due to thy king, been so carried away by the charms of this beautiful sorceress, that thou wouldst have helped her to escape from her prison-house, and lent her thine arm again to ascend the throne, which she had made a place of abomination? Nay, stir not from me — my hand, though fast stiffening, has yet force enough to hold thee. What dost thou aim at — to wed this witch of Scotland? I warrant thee, thou mayest succeed: her heart and hand have been oft won at a cheaper rate than thou, fool that thou art, would think thyself happy to pay. But, should a servant of thy father's house have seen thee embrace the fate of the idiot Darnley, or of the villain Bothwell — the fate of the murdered fool, or of the living pirate — while an ounce of ratsbane would have saved thee?'

'Think on God, Dryfesdale,' said George Douglas, 'and leave the utterance of those horrors. Repent if thou canst; if not, at least be silent. Seyton, aid me to support this dying wretch, that he may compose himself to better thoughts, if it be possible.'

'Seyton!' answered the dying man — 'Seyton! Is it by a Seyton's hand that I fall at last? There is something of retribution in that, since the house had nigh lost a sister by my deed.' Fixing his fading eyes on the youth, he added, 'He hath her very features and presence! Stoop down, youth, and let me see thee closer: I would know thee when we meet in yonder world, for homicides will herd together there, and I have been one.' He pulled Seyton's face, in spite of some resistance, closer to his own, looked at him fixedly, and added, 'Thou hast begun young; thy career will be the briefer — ay, thou wilt be met with, and that anon; a young plant never throve that was watered with an old man's blood. Yet why blame I thee? Strange turns of fate,' he muttered, ceasing to address Seyton, 'I designed what I could not do, and he has done what he did not perchance design. Wondrous, that our will should ever oppose itself to the strong and uncontrollable tide of destiny — that we should strive with the stream when we might drift with the current! My brain will serve me to question it no farther. I would Schöfferbach were here. Yet why? I am on a course which the vessel can hold without a pilot. Farewell, George of Douglas; I die true to thy father's house.' He fell into convulsions at these words, and shortly after expired.

Seyton and Douglas stood looking on the dying man, and when the scene was closed, the former was the first to speak. 'As I live, Douglas, I meant not this, and am sorry; but he laid hands on me, and compelled me to defend my freedom, as I best might, with my dagger. If he were ten times thy friend and follower, I can but say that I am sorry.'

'I blame thee not, Seyton,' said Douglas, 'though I lament the chance. There is an overruling destiny above us, though not in the sense in which it was viewed by that wretched man, who, beguiled by some foreign mystagogue, used the awful word as the ready apology for whatever he chose to do. We must examine the packet.'

They withdrew into an inner room, and remained deep in consultation, until they were disturbed by the entrance of Keltie, who, with an embarrassed countenance, asked Master George Douglas's pleasure respecting the disposal of the body. 'Your honour knows,' he added, 'that I make my bread by living men, not by dead corpses; and old Mr. Dryfesdale, who was but a sorry customer while he was alive, occupies my public room now that he is deceased, and can neither call for ale nor brandy.'

'Tie a stone round his neck,' said Seyton, 'and when the sun is down, have him to the Loch of Ore, heave him in, and let him alone for finding out the bottom.'

'Under your favour, sir,' said George Douglas, 'it shall not be so. Keltie, thou art a true fellow to me, and thy having been so shall advantage thee. Send or take the body to the chapel at Scotland's Wall, or to the church of Ballingry, and tell what tale thou wilt of his having fallen in a brawl with some unruly guests of thine. Auchtermuchty knows not else, nor are the times so peaceful as to admit close looking into such accounts.'

'Nay, let him tell the truth,' said Seyton, 'so far as it harms not our scheme. Say that Henry Seyton met with him, my good fellow. I care not a brass boddle for the feud.'

'A feud with the Douglas was ever to be feared, however,' said George, displeasure mingling with his natural deep gravity of manner.

'Not when the best of the name is on my side,' replied Seyton.

'Alas! Henry, if thou meanest me, I am but half a Douglas in this emprise — half head, half heart, and half hand. But I will think on one who can never be forgotten, and be all or

more than any of my ancestors was ever. Keltie, say it was Henry Seyton did the deed; but beware, not a word of me! Let Auchtermuchty carry this packet (which he had revealed with his own signet) to my father at Edinburgh; and here is to pay for the funeral expenses and thy loss of custom.'

'And the washing of the floor,' said the landlord, 'which will be an extraordinary job; for blood, they say, will scarcely ever cleanse out.'

'But as for your plan,' said George of Douglas, addressing Seyton, as if in continuation of what they had been before treating of, 'it has a good face; but, under your favour, you are yourself too hot and too young, besides other reasons which are much against your playing the part you propose.'

'We will consult the fat' or abbot upon it,' said the youth. 'Do you ride to Kinross to-night?'

'Ay, so I purpose,' answered Douglas; 'the night will be dark, and suits a muffled man.' Keltie, I forgot, there should be a stone laid on that man's grave, recording his name, and his only merit, which was being a faithful servant to the Douglas.'

'What religion was the man of?' said Seyton; 'he used words which make me fear I have sent Satan a subject before his time.'

'I can tell you little of that,' said George Douglas; 'he was noted for disliking both Rome and Geneva, and spoke of lights he had learned among the fierce sectaries of Lower Germany; an evil doctrine it was, if we judge by the fruits. God keep us from presumptuously judging of Heaven's secrets!'

'Amen!' said young Seyton, 'and from meeting any encounter this evening.'

'It is not thy wont to pray so,' said George Douglas.

'No! I leave that to you,' replied the youth, 'when you are seized with scruples of engaging with your father's vassals. But I would fain have this old man's blood off these hands of mine ere I shed more. I will confess to the abbot to-night, and I trust to have light penance for ridding the earth of such a miscreant. All I sorrow for is, that he was not a score of years younger. He drew steel first, however, that is one comfort.'

¹ See Note 23.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Ay, Pedro. Come you here with mask and lantern,
Ladder of ropes and other moonshine tools?
Why, youngster, thou mayest cheat the old duenna,
Flatter the waiting-woman, bribe the valet;
But know, that I her father play the gryphon,
Tameless and sleepless, proof to fraud or bribe,
And guard the hidden treasure of her beauty.

The Spanish Father.

THE tenor of our tale carries us back to the Castle of Lochleven, where we take up the order of events on the same remarkable day on which Dryfesdale had been dismissed from the castle. It was past noon, the usual hour of dinner, yet no preparations seemed made for the Queen's entertainment. Mary herself had retired into her own apartment, where she was closely engaged in writing. Her attendants were together in the presence-chamber, and much disposed to speculate on the delay of the dinner; for it may be recollected that their breakfast had been interrupted. 'I believe in my conscience,' said the page, 'that, having found the poisoning scheme miscarry, by having gone to the wrong merchant for their deadly wares, they are now about to try how famine will work upon us.'

Lady Fleming was somewhat alarmed at this surmise, but comforted herself by observing, that the chimney of the kitchen had reeked that whole day in a manner which contradicted the supposition. Catherine Seyton presently exclaimed, 'They were bearing the dishes across the court, marshalled by the Lady Lochleven herself, dressed out in her highest and stiffest ruff, with her partlet and sleeves of cyprus, and her huge old-fashioned farthingale of crimson velvet.'

'I believe, on my word,' said the page, approaching the window also, 'it was in that very farthingale that she captivated the heart of gentle King Jamie, which procured our poor Queen her precious bargain of a brother.'

'That may hardly be, Master Roland,' answered the Lady Fleming, who was a great recorder of the changes of fashion, 'since the farthingales came first in when the Queen Regent went to St. Andrews, after the battle of Pinkie, and were then called *vertu-gardins* —'

She would have proceeded farther in this important discussion, but was interrupted by the entrance of the Lady of Lochleven, who preceded the servants bearing the dishes, and formally discharged the duty of tasting each of them. Lady Fleming regretted, in courtly phrase, that the Lady of Lochleven should have undertaken so troublesome an office.

'After the strange incident of this day, madam,' said the lady, 'it is necessary for my honour and that of my son that I partake whatever is offered to my involuntary guest. Please to inform the Lady Mary that I attend her commands.'

'Her Majesty,' replied Lady Fleming, with due emphasis on the word, 'shall be informed that the Lady Lochleven waits.'

Mary appeared instantly, and addressed her hostess with courtesy, which even approached to something more cordial. 'This is nobly done, Lady Lochleven,' she said; 'for, though we ourselves apprehend no danger under your roof, our ladies have been much alarmed by this morning's chance, and our meal will be the more cheerful for your presence and assurance. Please you to sit down.'

The Lady Lochleven obeyed the Queen's commands, and Roland performed the office of carver and attendant as usual. But, notwithstanding what the Queen had said, the meal was silent and unsocial; and every effort which Mary made to excite some conversation died away under the solemn and chill replies of the Lady of Lochleven. At length it became plain that the Queen, who had considered these advances as a condescension on her part, and who piqued herself justly on her powers of pleasing, became offended at the repulsive conduct of her hostess. After looking with a significant glance at Lady Fleming and Catherine, she slightly shrugged her shoulders and remained silent. A pause ensued, at the end of which the Lady Douglas spoke — 'I perceive, madam, I am a check on the mirth of this fair company. I pray you to excuse me; I am a widow — alone here in a most perilous charge, deserted by my grandson, betrayed by my servant; I am little worthy of the grace you do me in offering me a seat at your table, where I am aware that wit and pastime are usually expected from the guests.'

'If the Lady Lochleven is serious,' said the Queen, 'we

wonder by what simplicity she expects our present meals to be seasoned with mirth. If she is a widow, she lives honoured and uncontrolled at the head of her late husband's household. But I know at least of one widowed woman in the world before whom the words "desertion" and "betrayal" ought never to be mentioned, since no one has been made so bitterly acquainted with their import.'

'I meant not, madam, to remind you of your misfortunes by the mention of mine,' answered the Lady Lochleven, and there was again a deep silence.

Mary at length addressed Lady Fleming. 'We can commit no deadly sins here, *ma bonne*, where we are so well warded and looked to; but if we could, this Carthusian silence might be useful as a kind of penance. If thou hast adjusted my wimple amiss, my Fleming, or if Catherine hath made a wry stitch in her broidery when she was thinking of something else than her work, or if Roland Grame hath missed a wild duck on the wing, and broke a quarrel pane¹ of glass in the turret window, as chanced to him a week since, now is the time to think on your sins and to repent of them.'

'Madam, I speak with all reverence,' said the Lady Lochleven; 'but I am old, and claim the privilege of age. Methinks your followers might find fitter subjects for repentance than the trifles you mention, and so mention—once more, I crave your pardon—as if you jested with sin and repentance both.'

'You have been our taster, Lady Lochleven,' said the Queen, 'I perceive you would eke out your duty with that of our father confessor; and since you choose that our conversation should be serious, may I ask you why the Regent's promise—since your son so styles himself—has not been kept to me in that respect? From time to time this promise has been renewed, and as constantly broken. Methinks those who pretend themselves to so much gravity and sanctity should not debar from others the religious succours which their consciences require.'

'Madam, the Earl of Murray was indeed weak enough,' said the Lady Lochleven, 'to give so far way to your unhappy prejudices, and a religioner of the Pope presented himself on his part at our town of Kinross. But the Douglas is lord of his own castle, and will not permit his threshold to be darkened, no, not for a single moment, by an emissary belonging to the Bishop of Rome.'

¹ Diamond-shaped; literally, formed like the head of a quarrel, or arrow for the crossbow.

'Methinks it were well, then,' said Mary, 'that my Lord Regent would send me where there is less scruple and more charity.'

'In this, madam,' answered the Lady Lochleven, 'you mistake the nature both of charity and of religion. Charity giveth to those who are in delirium the medicaments which may avail their health, but refuses those enticing cates and liquors which please the palate but augment the disease.'

'This your charity, Lady Lochleven, is pure cruelty under the hypocritical disguise of friendly care. I am oppressed amongst you as if you meant the destruction both of my body and soul; but Heaven will not endure such iniquity for ever, and they who are the most active agents in it may speedily expect their reward.'

At this moment Randal entered the apartment, with a look so much perturbed that the Lady Fleming uttered a faint scream, the Queen was obviously startled, and the Lady of Lochleven, though too bold and proud to evince any marked signs of alarm, asked hastily what was the matter.

'Dryfesdale has been slain, madam,' was the reply — 'murdered as soon as he gained the dry land by young Master Henry Seyton.'

It was now Catherine's turn to start and grow pale. 'Has the murderer of the Douglas's vassal escaped?' was the lady's hasty question.

'There was none to challenge him but Old Keltie and the carrier Auchtermuchty,' replied Randal, 'unlikely men to stay one of the frackest¹ youths in Scotland of his years, and who was sure to have friends and partakers at no great distance.'

'Was the deed completed?' said the lady.

'Done, and done thoroughly,' said Randal: 'a Seyton seldom strikes twice. But the body was not despoiled, and your honour's packet goes forward to Edinburgh by Auchtermuchty, who leaves Keltie Bridge early to-morrow; marry, he has drunk two bottles of aquavitæ to put the fright out of his head, and now sleeps them off beside his cart-avers.'²

There was a pause when this fatal tale was told. The Queen and Lady Douglas looked on each other, as if each thought how she could best turn the incident to her own advantage in the controversy which was continually kept alive betwixt them. Catherine Seyton kept her kerchief at her eyes and wept.

¹ Boldest — most forward.

² Cart-horses.

'You see, madam, the bloody maxims and practice of the deluded Papists,' said Lady Lochleven.

'Nay, madam,' replied the Queen, 'say rather you see the deserved judgment of Heaven upon a Calvinistical poisoner.'

'Dryfesdale was not of the Church of Geneva or of Scotland,' said the Lady Lochleven, hastily.

'He was a heretic, however,' replied Mary. 'There is but one true and unerring guide; the others lead alike into error.'

'Well, madam, I trust it will reconcile you to your retreat that this deed shows the temper of those who might wish you at liberty. Bloodthirsty tyrants and cruel men-quellers are they all, from the Clan Ranald and Clan Tosach in the north to the Fernherst and Buccleuch in the south, the murdering Seytons in the east, and ——'

'Methinks, madam, you forget that I am a Seyton!' said Catherine, withdrawing her kerchief from her face, which was now coloured with indignation.

'If I had forgot it, fair mistress, your forward bearing would have reminded me,' said Lady Lochleven.

'If my brother has slain the villain that would have poisoned his sovereign and his sister,' said Catherine, 'I am only so far sorry that he should have spared the hangman his proper task. For aught further, had it been the best Douglas in the land, he would have been honoured in falling by the Seyton's sword.'

'Farewell, gay mistress,' said the Lady of Lochleven, rising to withdraw; 'it is such maidens as you who make giddy-fashioned revellers and deadly brawlers. Boys must needs rise, forsooth, in the grace of some sprightly damsel, who thinks to dance through life as through a French galliard.' She then made her reverence to the Queen, and added, 'Do you also, madam, fare you well till curfew time, when I will make, perchance, more bold than welcome in attending upon your supper board. Come with me, Randal, and tell me more of this cruel fact.'

'Tis an extraordinary chance,' said the Queen, when she had departed; 'and, villain as he was, I would this man had been spared time for repentance. We will cause something to be done for his soul, if we ever attain our liberty, and the church will permit such grace to a heretic. But, tell me, Catherine, *ma mignonne* — this brother of thine, who is so "frack," as the fellow called him, bears he the same wonderful likeness to thee as formerly?'

'If your Grace means in temper, you know whether I am so frack as the serving-man spoke him.'

'Nay, thou art prompt enough in all reasonable conscience,' replied the Queen; 'but thou art my own darling notwithstanding. But I meant, is this thy twin-brother as like thee in form and features as formerly? I remember thy dear mother alleged it as a reason for destining thee to the veil that, were ye both to go at large, thou wouldst surely get the credit of some of thy brother's mad pranks.'

'I believe, madam,' said Catherine, 'there are some unusually simple people even yet who can hardly distinguish betwixt us, especially when, for diversion's sake, my brother hath taken a female dress,' and, as she spoke, she gave a quick glance at Roland Græme, to whom this conversation conveyed a ray of light welcome as ever streamed into the dungeon of a captive through the door which opened to give him freedom.

'He must be a handsome cavalier this brother of thine, if he be so like you,' replied Mary. 'He was in France, I think, for these late years, so that I saw him not at Holyrood.'

'His looks, madam, have never been much found fault with,' answered Catherine Seyton; 'but I would he had less of that angry and heady spirit which evil times have encouraged amongst our young nobles. God knows, I grudge not his life in your Grace's quarrel, and love him for the willingness with which he labours for your rescue. But wherefore should he brawl with an old ruffianly serving-man, and stain at once his name with such a broil and his hands with the blood of an old and ignoble wretch?'

'Nay, be patient, Catherine; I will not have thee traduce my gallant young knight. With Henry for my knight, and Roland Græme for my trusty squire, methinks I am like a princess of romance, who may shortly set at defiance the dungeons and the weapons of all wicked sorcerers. But my head aches with the agitation of the day. Take me *La Mer des Histoires*, and resume where we left off on Wednesday. Our Lady help thy head, girl, or rather may she help thy heart! I asked thee for the *Sea of Histories*, and thou hast brought *La Cronique d'Amour*!'

Once embarked upon the *Sea of Histories*, the Queen continued her labours with her needle, while Lady Fleming and Catherine read to her alternately for two hours.

As to Roland Græme, it is probable that he continued in secret intent upon the *Chronicle of Love*, notwithstanding the censure which the Queen seemed to pass upon that branch of study. He now remembered a thousand circumstances of voice and manner, which, had his own prepossession been less, must surely have

discriminated the brother from the sister : and he felt ashamed that, having as it were by heart every particular of Catherine's gestures, words, and manners, he should have thought her, notwithstanding her spirits and levity, capable of assuming the bold step, loud tones, and forward assurance which accorded well enough with her brother's hasty and masculine character. He endeavoured repeatedly to catch a glance of Catherine's eye, that he might judge how she was disposed to look upon him since he had made the discovery, but he was unsuccessful ; for Catherine, when she was not reading herself, seemed to take so much interest in the exploits of the Teutonic Knights against the heathens of Esthonia and Livonia, that he could not surprise her eye even for a second. But when, closing the book, the Queen commanded their attendance in the garden, Mary, perhaps of set purpose (for Roland's anxiety could not escape so practised an observer), afforded him a favourable opportunity of accosting his mistress. The Queen commanded them to a little distance, while she engaged Lady Fleming in a particular and private conversation ; the subject whereof, we learn from another authority, to have been the comparative excellence of the high standing ruff and the falling band. Roland must have been duller and more sheepish than ever was youthful lover if he had not endeavoured to avail himself of this opportunity.

'I have been longing this whole evening to ask of you, fair Catherine,' said the page, 'how foolish and unapprehensive you must have thought me, in being capable to mistake betwixt your brother and you ?'

'The circumstance does indeed little honour to my rustic manners,' said Catherine, 'since those of a wild young man were so readily mistaken for mine. But I shall grow wiser in time ; and with that view I am determined not to think of your follies, but to correct my own.'

'It will be the lighter subject of meditation of the two,' said Roland.

'I know not that,' said Catherine, very gravely ; 'I fear we have been both unpardonably foolish.'

'I have been mad,' said Roland — 'unpardonably mad. But you, lovely Catherine —'

'I,' said Catherine, in the same tone of unusual gravity, 'have too long suffered you to use such expressions towards me. I fear I can permit it no longer, and I blame myself for the pain it may give you.'

'And what can have happened so suddenly to change our

relation to each other, or alter, with such sudden cruelty, your whole deportment to me !'

'I can hardly tell,' replied Catherine, 'unless it is that the events of the day have impressed on my mind the necessity of our observing more distance to each other. A chance similar to that which betrayed to you the existence of my brother may make known to Henry the terms you have used to me ; and, alas ! his whole conduct, as well as his deed this day, makes me too justly apprehensive of the consequences.'

'Fear nothing for that, fair Catherine,' answered the page, 'I am well able to protect myself against risks of that nature.'

'That is to say,' replied she, 'that you would fight with my twin-brother to show your regard for his sister ! I have heard the Queen say, in her sad hours, that men are, in love or in hate, the most selfish animals of creation ; and your carelessness in this matter looks very like it. But be not so much abashed ; you are no worse than others.'

'You do me injustice, Catherine,' replied the page, 'I thought but of being threatened with a sword, and did not remember, in whose hand your fancy had placed it. If your brother stood before me, with his drawn weapon in his hand, so like as he is to you in word, person, and favour, he might shed my life's blood ere I could find in my heart to resist him to his injury.'

'Alas !' said she, 'it is not my brother alone. But you remember only the singular circumstances in which we have met in equality, and I may say in intimacy. You think not that, whenever I re-enter my father's house, there is a gulf between us you may not pass but with peril of your life. Your only known relative is of wild and singular habits, of a hostile and broken clan,¹ the rest of your lineage unknown ; forgive me that I speak what is the undeniable truth.'

'Love, my beautiful Catherine, despises genealogies,' answered Roland Græme.

'Love may, but so will not the Lord Seyton,' rejoined the damsel.

'The Queen, thy mistress and mine, she will intercede. Oh ! drive me not from you at the moment I thought myself most happy : And if I shall aid her deliverance, said not yourself that you and she would become my debtors ?'

'All Scotland will become your debtors,' said Catherine. 'But for the active effects you might hope from our gratitude,

¹ A broken clan was one who had no chief able to find security for their good behaviour — a clan of outlaws ; and the Græmes of the Debateable Land were in that condition.

you must remember I am wholly subjected to my father ; and the poor Queen is, for a long time, more likely to be dependent on the pleasure of the nobles of her party than possessed of power to control them.'

'Be it so,' replied Roland ; 'my deeds shall control prejudice itself : it is a bustling world, and I will have my share. The Knight of Avenel, high as he now stands, rose from as obscure an origin as mine.'

'Ay,' said Catherine, 'there spoke the doughty knight of romance, that will cut his way to the imprisoned princess through fiends and fiery dragons !'

'But if I can set the princess at large, and procure her the freedom of her own choice,' said the page, 'where, dearest Catherine, will that choice alight ?'

'Release the princess from duress, and she will tell you,' said the damsel ; and, breaking off the conversation abruptly, she joined the Queen so suddenly that Mary exclaimed, half-aloud —

'No more tidings of evil import — no dissension, I trust, in my limited household ?' Then looking on Catherine's blushing cheek and Roland's expanded brow and glancing eye — 'No — no,' she said, 'I see all is well. *Ma petite mignonne*, go to my apartment and fetch me down — let me see — ay, fetch my pomander box.'

And having thus disposed of her attendant in the manner best qualified to hide her confusion, the Queen added, speaking apart to Roland, 'I should at least have two grateful subjects of Catherine and you ; for what sovereign but Mary would aid true love so willingly ? Ay, you lay your hand on your sword — your *petite flamberge à rien* there. Well, short time will show if all the good be true that is protested to us. I hear them toll curfew from Kinross. To our chamber ; this old dame has promised to be with us again at our evening meal. Were it not for the hope of speedy deliverance, her presence would drive me distracted. But I will be patient.'

'I profess,' said Catherine, who just then entered, 'I would I could be Henry, with all a man's privileges, for one moment ; I long to throw my plate at that confect of pride, and formality, and ill-nature !'

The Lady Fleming reprimanded her young companion for this explosion of impatience, the Queen laughed, and they went to the presence-chamber, where almost immediately entered supper and the lady of the castle. The Queen, strong in her

prudent resolutions, endured her presence with great fortitude and equanimity, until her patience was disturbed by a new form, which had hitherto made no part of the ceremonial of the castle. When the other attendant had retired, Randal entered, bearing the keys of the castle fastened upon a chain, and, announcing that the watch was set and the gates locked, delivered the keys with all reverence to the Lady of Lochleven.

The Queen and her ladies exchanged with each other a look of disappointment, anger, and vexation; and Mary said aloud, 'We cannot regret the smallness of our court, when we see our hostess discharge in person so many of its offices. In addition to her charges of principal steward of our household and grand almoner, she has to-night done duty as captain of our guard.'

'And will continue to do so in future, madam,' answered the Lady Lochleven, with much gravity; 'the history of Scotland may teach me how ill the duty is performed which is done by an accredited deputy. We have heard, madam, of favourites of later date, and as little merit, as Oliver Sinclair.'¹

'Oh, madam,' replied the Queen, 'my father had his female as well as his male favourites: there were the Ladies Sandilands and Olifaunt,² and some others, methinks; but their names cannot survive in the memory of so grave a person as you.'

The Lady Lochleven looked as if she could have slain the Queen on the spot, but commanded her temper, and retired from the apartment, bearing in her hand the ponderous bunch of keys.

'Now God be praised for that woman's youthful frailty!' said the Queen. 'Had she not that weak point in her character, I might waste my words on her in vain. But that stain is the very reverse of what is said of the witch's mark: I can make her feel there, though she is otherwise insensible all over. But how say you, girls — here is a new difficulty. How are these keys to be come by? There is no deceiving or bribing this dragon, I trow.'

'May I crave to know,' said Roland, 'whether, if your Grace were beyond the walls of the castle, you could find means of conveyance to the firm land, and protection when you are there?'

'Trust us for that, Roland,' said the Queen; 'for to that point our scheme is indifferent well laid.'

¹ A favourite, and said to be an unworthy one, of James V.

² The names of these ladies, and a third frail favourite of James, are preserved in an epigram too *gaillard* for quotation.

'Then, if your Grace will permit me to speak my mind, I think I could be of some use in this matter.'

'As how, my good youth? Speak on,' said the Queen, 'and fearlessly.'

'My patron, the Knight of Avenel, used to compel the youth educated in his household to learn the use of axe and hammer, and working in wood and iron; he used to speak of old northern champions who forged their own weapons, and of the Highland captain, Donald nan Ord, or Donald of the Hammer, whom he himself knew, and who used to work at the anvil with a sledge-hammer in each hand. Some said he praised this art because he was himself of churl's blood. However, I gained some practice in it, as the Lady Catherine Seyton partly knows, for since we were here I wrought her a silver brooch.'

'Ay,' replied Catherine, 'but you should tell her Grace that your workmanship was so indifferent that it broke to pieces next day, and I flung it away.'

'Believe her not, Roland,' said the Queen; 'she wept when it was broken, and put the fragments into her bosom. But for your scheme — could your skill avail to forge a second set of keys?'

'No, madam, because I know not the wards. But I am convinced I could make a set so like that hateful bunch which the lady bore off even now, that, could they be exchanged against them by any means, she would never dream she was possessed of the wrong.'

'And the good dame, thank Heaven, is somewhat blind,' said the Queen; 'but then for a forge, my boy, and the means of labouring unobserved?'

'The armourer's forge, at which I used sometimes to work with him, is the round vault at the bottom of the turret; he was dismissed with the warder for being supposed too much attached to George Douglas. The people are accustomed to see me work there, and I warrant I shall find some excuse that will pass current with them for putting bellows and anvil to work.'

'The scheme has a promising face,' said the Queen; 'about it, my lad, with all speed, and beware the nature of your work is not discovered.'

'Nay, I will take the liberty to draw the bolt against chance visitors, so that I will have time to put away what I am working upon before I undo the door.'

'Will not that of itself attract suspicion, in a place where it is so current already?' said Catherine.

'Not a whit,' replied Roland; 'Gregory the armourer, and every good hainmerman, locks himself in when he is about some masterpiece of craft. Besides, something must be risked.'

'Part we then to-night,' said the Queen, 'and God bless you, my children! If Mary's head ever rises above water, you shall all rise along with her.'

CHAPTER XXXV

It is a time of danger, not of revel,
When churchmen turn to masquers.

Spanish Father.

THE enterprise of Roland Græme appeared to prosper. A trinket or two, of which the work did not surpass the substance (for the materials were silver, supplied by the Queen), were judiciously presented to those most likely to be inquisitive into the labours of the forge and anvil, which they thus were induced to reckon profitable to others and harmless in itself. Openly, the page was seen working about such trifles. In private he forged a number of keys resembling so nearly in weight and in form those which were presented every evening to the Lady Lochleven, that, on a slight inspection, it would have been difficult to perceive the difference. He brought them to the dark rusty colour by the use of salt and water; and, in the triumph of his art, presented them at length to Queen Mary in her presence-chamber, about an hour before the tolling of the curfew. She looked at them with pleasure, but at the same time with doubt. 'I allow,' she said, 'that the Lady Lochleven's eyes, which are not of the clearest, may be well deceived, could we pass those keys on her in place of the real implements of her tyranny. But how is this to be done, and which of my little court dare attempt this *tour de jongleur* with any chance of success? Could we but engage her in some earnest matter of argument! but those which I hold with her always have been of a kind which make her grasp her keys the faster, as if she said to herself — "Here I hold what sets me above your taunts and reproaches." And even for her liberty, Mary Stuart could not stoop to speak the proud heretic fair. What shall we do? Shall Lady Fleming try her eloquence in describing the last new head-tire from Paris? Alas! the good dame has not changed the fashion of her head-gear since Pinkie field, for aught that I know. Shall my *mignonne* Catherine

sing to her one of those touching airs which draw the very souls out of me and Roland Grème! Alas! Dame Margaret Douglas would rather hear a Huguenot psalm of Clément Marot, sung to the tune of *Réveillez-vous, belle endormie*. Cousins and liege counsellors, what is to be done, for our wits are really astray in this matter? Must our man-at-arms and the champion of our body, Roland Grème, manfully assault the old lady, and take the keys from her *par voie du fait*?

'Nay! with your Grace's permission,' said Roland, 'I do not doubt being able to manage the matter with more discretion; for though, in your Grace's service, I do not fear —'

'A host of old women,' interrupted Catherine, 'each armed with rock and spindle; yet he has no fancy for pikes and partizans, which might rise at the cry of "Help! a Douglas — a Douglas!"'

'They that do not fear fair ladies' tongues,' continued the page, 'need dread nothing else. But, gracious liege, I am wellnigh satisfied that I could pass the exchange of these keys on the Lady Lochleven; but I dread the sentinel who is now planted nightly in the garden, which, by necessity, we must traverse.'

'Our last advices from our friends on the shore have promised us assistance in that matter,' replied the Queen.

'And is your Grace well assured of the fidelity and watchfulness of those without?'

'For their fidelity I will answer with my life, and for their vigilance I will answer with my life. I will give thee instant proof, my faithful Roland, that they are ingenuous and trusty as thyself. Come hither. Nay, Catherine, attend us; we carry not so deft a page into our private chamber alone. Make fast the door of the parlour, Fleming, and warn us if you hear the least step — or stay, go thou to the door, Catherine (in a whisper), thy ears and thy wits are both sharper. Good Fleming, attend us thyself. (And again she whispered) Her reverend presence will be as safe a watch on Roland as thine can, so be not jealous, *mignonne*.'

Thus speaking, they were lighted by the Lady Fleming into the Queen's bedroom, a small apartment enlightened by a projecting window.

'Look from that window, Roland,' she said; 'see you amongst the several lights which begin to kindle, and to glimmer palely through the grey of the evening from the village of Kinross — seest thou, I say, one solitary spark apart from the others, and nearer it seems to the verge of the water? It is no brighter at

this distance than the torch of the poor glow-worm, and yet, my good youth, that light is more dear to Mary Stewart than every star that twinkles in the blue vault of heaven. By that signal, I know that more than one true heart is plotting my deliverance; and without that consciousness, and the hope of freedom it gives me, I had long since stooped to my fate and died of a broken heart. Plan after plan has been formed and abandoned; but still the light glimmers, and while it glimmers my hope lives. Oh! how many evenings have I sat musing in despair over our ruined schemes, and scarce hoping that I should again see that blessed signal; when it has suddenly kindled, and, like the lights of St. Elmo in a tempest, brought hope and consolation where there was only dejection and despair!

'If I mistake not,' answered Roland, 'the candle shines from the house of Blinkhoolie, the mail-gardener.'

'Thou hast a good eye,' said the Queen; 'it is there where my trusty lieges — God and the saints pour blessings on them! — hold consultation for my deliverance. The voice of a wretched captive would die on these blue waters long ere it could mingle in their councils, and yet I can hold communication — I will confide the whole to thee — I am about to ask those faithful friends if the moment for the great attempt is nigh. Place the lamp in the window, Fleming.'

She obeyed, and immediately withdrew it. No sooner had she done so than the light in the cottage of the gardener disappeared.

'Now, count,' said Queen Mary, 'for my heart beats so thick that I cannot count myself.'

The Lady Fleming began deliberately to count one, two, three, and when she had arrived at ten the light on the shore showed its pale twinkle.

'Now, Our Lady be praised!' said the Queen; 'it was but two nights since that the absence of the light remained while I could tell thirty. The hour of deliverance approaches. May God bless those who labour in it with such truth to me! — alas! with such hazard to themselves — and bless you too, my children! Come, we must to the audience-chamber again. Our absence might excite suspicion, should they serve supper.'

They returned to the presence-chamber, and the evening concluded as usual.

The next morning, at dinner-time, an unusual incident occurred. While Lady Douglas of Lochleven performed her daily duty of assistant and taster at the Queen's table, she was told

a man-at-arms had arrived, recommended by her son, but without any letter or other token than what he brought by word of mouth.

'Hath he given you that token?' demanded the lady.

'He reserved it, as I think, for your ladyship's ear,' replied Randal.

'He doth well,' said the lady; 'tell him to wait in the hall. But no—with your permission, madam (to the Queen)—let him attend me here.'

'Since you are pleased to receive your domestics in my presence,' said the Queen, 'I cannot choose—'

'My infirmities must plead my excuse, madam,' replied the lady; 'the life I must lead here ill suits with the years which have passed over my head, and compels me to waive ceremonial.'

'Oh, my good lady,' replied the Queen, 'I would there wereought in this your castle more strongly compulsive than the cobweb chains of ceremony; but bolts and bars are harder matters to contend with.'

As she spoke, the person announced by Randal entered the room, and Roland Grame at once recognised in him the Abbot Ambrosius.

'What is your name, good fellow?' said the lady.

'Edward Glendinning,' answered the abbot, with a suitable reverence.

'Art thou of the blood of the Knight of Avenel?' said the Lady of Lochleven.

'Ay, madam, and that nearly,' replied the pretended soldier.

'It is likely enough,' said the lady, 'for the knight is the son of his own good works, and has risen from obscure lineage to his present high rank in the estate. But he is of sure truth and approved worth, and his kinsman is welcome to us. You hold, unquestionably, the true faith?'

'Do not doubt of it, madam,' said the disguised churchman.

'Hast thou a token to me from Sir William Douglas?' said the lady.

'I have, madam,' replied he; 'but it must be said in private.'

'Thou art right,' said the lady, moving towards the recess of a window; 'say in what does it consist?'

'In the words of an old bard,' replied the abbot.

'Repeat them,' answered the lady; and he uttered, in a low tone, the lines from an old poem called *The Howlet*¹—

¹ See Note 24.

'O, Douglas ! Douglas !
Tender and true.'

'Trusty Sir John Holland !' said the Lady Douglas, apostrophising the poet, 'a kinder heart never inspired a rhyme, and the Douglas's honour was ever on thy harp-string ! We receive you among our followers, Glendinning. But, Randal, see that he keep the outer ward only, till we shall hear more touching him from our son. Thou fearest not the night air, Glendinning !'

'In the cause of the lady before whom I stand, I fear nothing, madam,' answered the disguised abbot.

'Our garrison, then, is stronger by one trustworthy soldier,' said the matron. 'Go to the buttery, and let them make much of thee.'

When the Lady Lochleven had retired, the Queen said to Roland Grame, who was now almost constantly in her company, 'I spy comfort in that stranger's countenance ; I know not why it should be so, but I am well persuaded he is a friend.'

'Your Grace's penetration does not deceive you,' answered the page ; and he informed her that the abbot of St. Mary's himself played the part of the newly-arrived soldier.

The Queen crossed herself, and looked upwards. 'Unworthy sinner that I am,' she said, 'that for my sake a man so holy, and so high in spiritual office, should wear the garb of a base swordsman, and run the risk of dying the death of a traitor !'

'Heaven will protect its own servant, madam,' said Catherine Seyton ; 'his aid would bring a blessing on our undertaking, were it not as ready blest for its own sake.'

'What I admire in my spiritual father,' said Roland, 'was the steady front with which he looked on me, without giving the least sign of former acquaintance. I did not think the like was possible, since I have ceased to believe that Henry was the same person with Catherine.'

'But marked you not how astuciously the good father,' said the Queen, 'eluded the questions of the woman Lochleven, telling her the very truth, which yet she received not as such ?'

Roland thought in his heart that, when the truth was spoken for the purpose of deceiving, it was little better than a lie in disguise. But it was no time to agitate such questions of conscience.

'And now for the signal from the shore !' exclaimed Catherine ; 'my bosom tells me we shall see this night two

lights instead of one gleam from that garden of Eden. And then, Roland, do you play your part manfully, and we will dance on the greensward like midnight fairies !'

Catherine's conjecture misgave not, nor deceived her. In the evening two beams twinkled from the cottage, instead of one ; and the page heard, with beating heart, that the new retainer was ordered to stand sentinel on the outside of the castle. When he intimated this news to the Queen, she held her hand out to him ; he knelt, and when he raised it to his lips in all dutiful homage, he found it was damp and cold as marble. 'For God's sake, madam, droop not now — sink not now !'

'Call upon Our Lady, my liege,' said the Lady Fleming — 'call upon your tutelar saint.'

'Call the spirits of the hundred kings you are descended from !' exclaimed the page ; 'in this hour of need, the resolution of a monarch were worth the aid of a hundred saints.'

'Oh ! Roland Grame,' said Mary, in a tone of deep despondency, 'be true to me ; many have been false to me. Alas ! I have not always been true to myself ! My mind misgives me that I shall die in bondage, and that this bold attempt will cost all our lives. It was foretold me by a soothsayer in France that I should die in prison, and by a violent death, and here comes the hour. Oh, would to God it found me prepared !'

'Madam,' said Catherine Seyton, 'remember you are a queen. Better we all died in bravely attempting to gain our freedom than remained here to be poisoned, as men rid them of the noxious vermin that haunt old houses.'

'You are right, Catherine,' said the Queen ; 'and Mary will bear her like herself. But, alas ! your young and buoyant spirit can ill spell the causes which have broken mine. Forgive me, my chi'dren, and farewell for a while ; I will prepare both mind and body for this awful venture.'

They separated, till again called together by the tolling of the curfew. The Queen appeared grave, but firm and resolved ; the Lady Fleming, with the art of an experienced courtier, knew perfectly how to disguise her inward tremors ; Catherine's eye was fired, as if with the boldness of the project, and the half-smile which dwelt upon her beautiful mouth seemed to contemn all the risk and all the consequences of discovery ; Roland, who felt how much success depended on his own address and boldness, summoned together his whole presence

of mind, and if he found his spirits flag for a moment, cast his eye upon Catherine, whom he thought he had never seen look so beautiful. 'I may be foiled,' he thought, 'but, with this reward in prospect, they must bring the devil to aid them ere they cross me.' Thus resolved, he stood like a greyhound in the slips, with hand, heart, and eye intent upon making and seizing opportunity for the execution of their project.

The keys had, with the wonted ceremonial, been presented to the Lady Lochleven. She stood with her back to the casement, which, like that of the Queen's apartment, commanded a view of Kinross, with the church, which stands at some distance from the town, and nearer to the lake, then connected with the town by straggling cottagers. With her back to this casement, then, and her face to the table, on which the keys lay for an instant while she tasted the various dishes which were placed there, stood the Lady of Lochleven, more provokingly intent than usual — so at least it seemed to her prisoners — upon the huge and heavy bunch of iron, the implements of their restraint. Just when, having finished her ceremony as taster of the Queen's table, she was about to take up the keys, the page, who stood beside her, and had handed her the dishes in succession, looked sidewise to the churchyard, and exclaimed he saw corpse-candles in the vault. The Lady of Lochleven was not without a touch, though a slight one, of the superstitions of the time: the fate of her sons made her alive to omens, and a corpse-light, as it was called, in the family burial-place boded death. She turned her head towards the casement — saw a distant glimmering — forgot her charge for one second, and in that second were lost the whole fruits of her former vigilance. The page held the forged keys under his cloak, and with great dexterity exchanged them for the real ones. His utmost address could not prevent a slight clash as he took up the latter bunch. 'Who touches the keys?' said the lady; and while the page answered that the sleeve of his cloak had stirred them, she looked round, possessed herself of the bunch which now occupied the place of the genuine keys, and again turned to gaze on the supposed corpse candles.

'I hold these gleams,' she said, after a moment's consideration, 'to come, not from the churchyard, but from the hut of the old gardener Blinkhoolie. I wonder what thrift that churl drives, that of late he hath ever had light in his house till the night grew deep. I thought him an industrious, peaceful man.

If he turns resetter of idle companions and night-walkers, the place must be rid of him.'

'He may work his baskets, perchance,' said the page, desirous to stop the train of her suspicion.

'Or nets, may he not?' answered the lady.

'Ay, madam,' said Roland, 'for trout and salmon.'

'Or for fools and knaves,' replied the lady; 'but this shall be looked after to-morrow. I wish your Grace and your company a good evening. Randal, attend us.' And Randal, who waited in the ante-chamber after having surrendered his bunch of keys, gave his escort to his mistress as usual, while, leaving the Queen's apartments, she retired to her own.

'To-morrow!' said the page, rubbing his hands with glee as he repeated the lady's last words; 'fools look to to-morrow, and wise folk use to-night. May I pray you, my gracious liege, to retire for one half-hour, until all the castle is composed to rest? I must go and rub with oil these blessed implements of our freedom. Courage and constancy, and all will go well, provided our friends on the shore fail not to send the boat you spoke of.'

'Fear them not,' said Catherine, 'they are true as steel — if our dear mistress do but maintain her noble and royal courage.'

'Doubt not me, Catherine,' replied the Queen; 'a while since I was overborne, but I have recalled the spirit of my earlier and more sprightly days, when I used to accompany my armed nobles, and wish to be myself a man, to know what life it was to be in the fields with sword and buckler, jack and knapsack!'

'Oh, the lark lives not a gayer life, nor sings a lighter and gayer song, than the merry soldier,' answered Catherine. 'Your Grace shall be in the midst of them soon, and the look of such a liege sovereign will make each of your host worth three in the hour of need. But I must to my task.'

'We have but brief time,' said Queen Mary: 'one of the two lights in the cottage is extinguished; that shows the boat is put off.'

'They will row very slow,' said the page, 'or kent where depth permits, to avoid noise. To our several tasks. I will communicate with the good father.'

At the dead hour of midnight, when all was silent in the castle, the page put the key into the lock of the wicket which opened into the garden, and which was at the bottom of a

¹ See Demeanour of Queen Mary. Note 25.

staircase which descended from the Queen's apartment. 'Now, turn smooth and softly, thou good bolt,' said he, 'if ever oil softened rust!' and his precautions had been so effectual that the bolt revolved with little or no sound of resistance. He ventured not to cross the threshold, but exchanging a word with the disguised abbot, asked if the boat were ready.

'This half-hour,' said the sentinel. 'She lies beneath the wall, too close under the islet to be seen by the warder; but I fear she will hardly escape his notice in putting off again.'

'The darkness,' said the page, 'and our profound silence, may take her off unobserved, as she came in. Hildebrand has the watch on the tower—a heavy-headed knave, who holds a can of ale to be the best head-piece upon a night-watch. He sleeps for a wager.'

'Then bring the Queen,' said the abbot, 'and I will call Henry Seyton to assist them to the boat.'

On tiptoe, with noiseless step and suppressed breath, trembling at every rustle of their own apparel, one after another the fair prisoners glided down the winding stair, under the guidance of Roland Græme, and were received at the wicket-gate by Henry Seyton and the churchman. The former seemed instantly to take upon himself the whole direction of the enterprise. 'My lord abbot,' he said, 'give my sister your arm; I will conduct the Queen, and that youth will have the honour to guide Lady Fleming.'

This was no time to dispute the arrangement, although it was not that which Roland Græme would have chosen. Catherine Seyton, who well knew the garden path, tripped on before like a sylph, rather leading the abbot than receiving assistance; the Queen, her native spirit prevailing over female fear and a thousand painful reflections, moved steadily forward, by the assistance of Henry Seyton; while the Lady Fleming encumbered with her fears and her helplessness Roland Græme, who followed in the rear, and who bore under the other arm a packet of necessaries belonging to the Queen. The door of the garden, which communicated with the shore of the islet, yielded to one of the keys of which Roland had possessed himself, although not until he had tried several—a moment of anxious terror and expectation. The ladies were then partly led, partly carried, to the side of the lake, where a boat with six rowers attended them, the men couched along the bottom to secure them from observation. Henry Seyton placed the Queen in the stern: the abbot offered to assist Catherine, but she was seated by

the Queen's side before he could utter his proffer of help ; and Roland Graeme was just lifting Lady Fleming over the boat-side when a thought suddenly occurred to him, and exclaiming, 'Forgotten — forgotten ! wait for me but one half minute,' he replaced on the shore the helpless lady of the bedchamber, threw the Queen's packet into the boat, and sped back through the garden with the noiseless speed of a bird on the wing.

'By Heaven, he is false at last !' said Seyton ; 'I ever feared it !'

'He is as true,' said Catherine, 'as Heaven itself, and that I will maintain.'

'Be silent, minion,' said her brother, 'for shame, if not for fear. Fellows, put off, and row for your lives !'

'Help me — help me on board !' said the deserted Lady Fleming, and that louder than prudence warranted.

'Put off — put off !' cried Henry Seyton ; 'leave all behind, so the Queen is safe.'

'Will you permit this, madam ?' said Catherine, imploringly ; 'you leave your deliverer to death.'

'I will not,' said the Queen. 'Seyton, I command you to stay at every risk.'

'Pardon me, madam, if I disobey,' said the intractable young man ; and with one hand lifting in Lady Fleming, he began himself to push off the boat.

She was two fathoms' length from the shore, and the rowers were getting her head round, when Roland Graeme, arriving, bounded from the beach, and attained the boat, overturning Seyton, on whom he lighted. The youth swore a deep but suppressed oath, and stopping Graeme as he stepped towards the stern, said, 'Your place is not with high-born dames ; keep at the head and trim the vessel. Now give way — give way. Row, for God and the Queen !'

The rowers obeyed, and began to pull vigorously.

'Why did you not muffle the oars ?' said Roland Graeme ; 'the dash must awaken the sentinel. Row, lads, and get out of reach of shot ; for had not old Hildebrand, the warder, supped upon poppy-porridge, this whispering must have waked him.'

'It was all thine own delay,' said Seyton ; 'thou shalt reckon with me hereafter for that and other matters.'

But Roland's apprehension was verified too instantly to permit him to reply. The sentinel, whose slumbering had withstood the whispering, was alarmed by the dash of the oars. His challenge was instantly heard. 'A boat — a boat ! bring to,

or I shoot!' And, as they continued to ply their oars, he called aloud, 'Treason! — treason!' rung the bell of the castle, and discharged his harquebuss at the boat. The ladies crowded on each other like startled wild-fowl, at the flash and report of the piece, while the men urged the rowers to the utmost speed. They heard more than one ball whiz along the surface of the lake, at no great distance from their little bark; and from the lights, which glanced like meteors from window to window, it was evident the whole castle was alarmed, and their escape discovered.

'Pull!' again exclaimed Seyton; 'stretch to your oars, or I will spur you to the task with my dagger; they will launch a boat immediately.'

'That is cared for,' said Roland; 'I locked gate and wicket on them when I went back, and no boat will stir from the island this night, if doors of good oak and bolts of iron can keep men within stone walls. And now I resign my office of porter of Lochleven, and give the keys to the Kelpie's keeping.'

As the heavy keys plunged in the lake the abbot, who till then had been repeating his prayers, exclaimed, 'Now, bless thee, my son! for thy ready prudence puts shame on us all.'

'I knew,' said Mary, drawing her breath more freely, as they were now out of reach of the musketry — 'I knew my squire's truth, promptitude, and sagacity. I must have him dear friends with my no less true knights, Douglas and Seyton; but where, then, is Douglas?'

'Here, madam,' answered the deep and melancholy voice of the boatman who sat next her, and who acted as steersman.

'Alas! was it you who stretched your body before me,' said the Queen, 'when the balls were raining around us?'

'Believe you,' said he, in a low tone, 'that Douglas would have resigned to any one the chance of protecting his Queen's life with his own?'

The dialogue was here interrupted by a shot or two from one of those small pieces of artillery called falconets, then used in defending castles. The shot was too vague to have any effect, but the broader flash, the deeper sound, the louder return which was made by the midnight echoes of Benmore terrified and imposed silence on the liberated prisoners. The boat was alongside of a rude quay or landing-place, running out from a garden of considerable extent, ere any of them again attempted to speak. They landed, and while the abbot returned thanks

¹ See Escape of Queen Mary from Lochleven. Note 26.

aloud to Heaven, which had thus far favoured their enterprise, Douglas enjoyed the best reward of his desperate undertaking, in conducting the Queen to the house of the gardener. Yet, not unmindful of Roland Græme, even in that moment of terror and exhaustion, Mary expressly commanded Seyton to give his assistance to Fleming, while Catherine voluntarily, and without bidding, took the arm of the page. Seyton presently assigned Lady Fleming to the care of the abbot, alleging he must look after their horses; and his attendants, disencumbering themselves of their boat-cloaks, hastened to assist him.

While Mary spent in the gardener's cottage the few minutes which were necessary to prepare the steeds for their departure, she perceived in a corner the old man to whom the garden belonged, and called him to approach. He came as it were with reluctance.

'How, brother,' said the abbot, 'so slow to welcome thy royal Queen and mistress to liberty and to her kingdom!'

The old man, thus admonished, came forward, and, in good terms of speech, gave her Grace joy of her deliverance.

The Queen returned him thanks in the most gracious manner, and added, 'It will remain to us to offer some immediate reward for your fidelity, for we wot well your house has been long the refuge in which our trusty servants have met to concert measures for our freedom.' So saying, she offered gold, and added, 'We will consider your services more fully hereafter.'

'Kneel, brother,' said the abbot — 'kneel instantly, and thank her Grace's kindness.'

'Good brother, that wert once a few steps under me, and art still many years younger,' replied the gardener, pettishly, 'let me do mine acknowledgments in my own way. Queens have knelt to me ere now, and in truth my knees are too old and stiff to bend even to this lovely-faced lady. May it please your Grace, if your Grace's servants have occupied my house, so that I could not call it mine own; if they have trodden down my flowers in the zeal of their midnight comings and goings, and destroyed the hope of the fruit season by bringing their war-horses into my garden, I do but crave of your Grace in requital that you will choose your residence as far from me as possible. I am an old man, who would willingly creep to my grave as easily as I can, in peace, good-will, and quiet labour.'

'I promise you fairly, good man,' said the Queen, 'I will not make yonder castle my residence again, if I can help it. But

let me press on you this money ; it will make some amends for the havoc we have made in your little garden and orchard.'

'I thank your Grace, but it will make me not the least amends,' said the old man. 'The ruined labours of a whole year are not so easily replaced to him who has perchance but that one year to live ; and, besides, they tell me I must leave this place, and become a wanderer in mine old age — I that have nothing on earth saving these fruit-trees, and a few old parchments and family secrets not worth knowing. As for gold, if I had loved it, I might have remained lord abbot of St. Mary's ; and yet I wot not, for if Abbot Boniface be but the poor peasant Blinkhoolie, his successor, the Abbot Ambrosius, is still transmuted for the worse into the guise of a sword-and-buckler-man.'

'Is this indeed the Abbot Boniface of whom I have heard ?' said the Queen. 'It is indeed I who should have bent the knee for your blessing, good father !'

'Bend no knee to me, lady ! The blessing of an old man, who is no longer an abbot, go with you over dale and down. I hear the trampling of your horses.'

'Farewell, father,' said the Queen. 'When we are once more seated at Holyrood, we will neither forget thee nor thine injured garden.'

'Forget us both,' said the Ex-Abbot Boniface, 'and may God be with you !'

As they hurried out of the house, they heard the old man talking and muttering to himself, as he hastily drew bolt and bar behind them.

'The revenge of the Douglasses will reach the poor old man,' said the Queen. 'God help me, I ruin every one whom I approach !'

'His safety is cared for,' said Seyton ; 'he must not remain here, but will be privately conducted to a place of greater security. But I would your Grace were in the saddle. To horse ! — to horse !'

The party of Seyton and of Douglas were increased to about ten by those attendants who had remained with the horses. The Queen and her ladies, with all the rest who came from the boat, were instantly mounted ; and holding aloof from the village, which was already alarmed by the firing from the castle, with Douglas acting as their guide, they soon reached the open ground, and began to ride as fast as was consistent with keeping together in good order.

CHAPTER XXXVI

He mounted himself on a coal-black steed,
And her on a freckled grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down from his side,
And roundly they rode away.

Old Ballad.

THE influence of the free air, the rushing of the horses over high and low, the ringing of the bridles, the excitation at once arising from a sense of freedom and of rapid motion, gradually dispelled the confused and dejected sort of stupefaction by which Queen Mary was at first overwhelmed. She could not at last conceal the change of her feelings to the person who rode at her rein, and who she doubted not was the Father Ambrosius ; for Seyton, with all the heady impetuosity of a youth, proud, and justly so, of his first successful adventure, assumed all the bustle and importance of commander of the little party, which escorted, in the language of the time, the Fortune of Scotland. He now led the van, now checked his bounding steed till the rear had come up, exhorted the leaders to keep a steady, though rapid, pace, and commanded those who were hindmost of the party to use their spurs, and allow no interval to take place in their line of march ; and anon he was beside the Queen or her ladies, inquiring how they brooked the hasty journey, and whether they had any commands for him. But while Seyton thus busied himself in the general cause with some advantage to the regular order of the march, and a good deal of personal ostentation, the horseman who rode beside the Queen gave her his full and undivided attention, as if he had been waiting upon some superior being. When the road was rugged and dangerous, he abandoned almost entirely the care of his own horse, and kept his hand constantly upon the Queen's bridle ; if a river or larger brook traversed their course, his left arm retained her in the saddle, while his right held her palfrey's rein.

'I had not thought, reverend father,' said the Queen, when they reached the other bank, 'that the convent bred such good horsemen.' The person she addressed sighed, but made no other answer. 'I know not how it is,' said Queen Mary, 'but either the sense of freedom, or the pleasure of my favourite exercise, from which I have been so long debarred, or both combined, seem to have given wings to me: no fish ever shot through the water, no bird through the air, with the hurried feeling of liberty and rapture with which I sweep through this night-wind, and over these wolds. Nay, such is the magic of feeling myself once more in the saddle, that I could almost swear I am at this moment mounted on my own favorite Rosabelle, who was never matched in Scotland for swiftness, for ease of motion, and for sureness of foot.'

'And if the horse which bears so dear a burden could speak,' answered the deep voice of the melancholy George of Douglas, 'would she not reply, who but Rosabelle ought at such an emergence as this to serve her beloved mistress, or who but Douglas ought to hold her bridle-rein?'

Queen Mary started; she foresaw at once all the evils like to arise to herself and him from the deep enthusiastic passion of this youth; but her feelings as a woman, grateful at once and compassionate, prevented her assuming the dignity of a Queen, and she endeavoured to continue the conversation in an indifferent tone.

'Methought,' she said, 'I heard that, at the division of my spoils, Rosabelle had become the property of Lord Morton's paramour and ladye-love, Alice.'

'The noble palfrey had indeed been destined to so base a lot,' answered Douglas. 'She was kept under four keys, and under the charge of a numerous crew of grooms and domestics; but Queen Mary needed Rosabelle, and Rosabelle is here.'

'And was it well, Douglas,' said Queen Mary, 'when such fearful risks of various kinds must needs be encountered, that you should augment their perils to yourself for a subject of so little moment as a palfrey?'

'Do you call that of little moment,' answered Douglas, 'which has afforded you a moment's pleasure? Did you not start with joy when I first said you were mounted on Rosabelle? And to purchase you that pleasure, though it were to last no longer than the flash of lightning doth, would not Douglas have risked his life a thousand times?'

'Oh, peace, Douglas—peace,' said the Queen, 'this is unfitting

language, and, besides, I would speak,' said she, recollecting herself, 'with the abbot of St. Mary's. Nay, Douglas, I will not let you quit my rein in displeasure.'

'Displeasure, lady!' answered Douglas; 'alas! sorrow is all that I can feel for your well-warranted contempt. I should be as soon displeased with Heaven for refusing the wildest wish which mortal can form.'

'Abide by my rein, however,' said Mary, 'there is room for my lord abbot on the other side; and, besides, I doubt if his assistance would be so useful to Rosabelle and me as yours has been, should the road again require it.'

The abbot came up on the other side, and she immediately opened a conversation with him on the topic of the state of parties, and the plan fittest for her to pursue in consequence of her deliverance. In this conversation Douglas took little share, and never but when directly applied to by the Queen, while, as before, his attention seemed entirely engrossed by the care of Mary's personal safety. She learned, however, she had a new obligation to him, since, by his contrivance, the abbot, whom he had furnished with the family password, was introduced into the castle as one of the garrison.

Long before daybreak they ended their hasty and perilous journey before the gates of Niddrie, a castle in West Lothian, belonging to Lord Seyton. When the Queen was about to alight, Henry Seyton, preventing Douglas, received her in his arms, and, kneeling down, prayed her Majesty to enter the house of his father, her faithful servant.

'Your Grace,' he added, 'may repose yourself here in perfect safety: it is already garrisoned with good men for your protection; and I have sent a post to my father, whose instant arrival, at the head of five hundred men, may be looked for. Do not dismay yourself, therefore, should your sleep be broken by the trampling of horse; but only think that here are some scores more of the saucy Seytons come to attend you.'

'And by better friends than the saucy Seytons a Scottish queen cannot be guarded,' replied Mary. 'Rosabelle went fleet as the summer breeze, and wellnigh as easy; but it is long since I have been a traveller, and I feel that repose will be welcome. Catherine, *ma mignonne*, you must sleep in my apartment to-night, and bid me welcome to your noble father's castle. Thanks — thanks to all my kind deliverers; thanks, and a good-night is all I can now offer; but if I climb once more to the upper side of Fortune's wheel I will not have her bandage.

Mary Stewart will keep her eyes open, and distinguish her friends. Seyton, I need scarcely recommend the venerable abbot, the Douglas, and my page to your honourable care and hospitality.'

Henry Seaton bowed, and Catherine and Lady Fleming attended the Queen to her apartment; where, acknowledging to them that she should have found it difficult in that moment to keep her promise of holding her eyes open, she resigned herself to repose, and awakened not till the morning was advanced.

Mary's first feeling when she awoke was the doubt of her freedom; and the impulse prompted her to start from bed, and hastily throwing her mantle over her shoulders, to look out at the casement of her apartment. Oh sight of joy! instead of the crystal sheet of Lochleven, unaltered save by the influence of the wind, a landscape of wood and moorland lay before her, and the park around the castle was occupied by the troops of her most faithful and most favourite nobles.

'Rise — rise, Catherine,' cried the enraptured Princess — 'arise and come hither! Here are swords and spears in true hands, and glittering armour on loyal breasts. Here are banners, my girl, floating in the wind, as lightly as summer clouds. Great God! what pleasure to my weary eyes to trace their devices — thine own brave father's — the princely Hamilton's — the faithful Fleming's. See — see — they have caught a glimpse of me, and throng towards the window!

She flung the casement open, and with her bare head, from which the tresses flew back loose and dishevelled, her fair arm, slenderly veiled by her mantle, returned by motion and sign the exulting shouts of the warriors, which echoed for many a furlong around. When the first burst of ecstatic joy was over she recollected how lightly she was dressed, and, putting her hands to her face, which was covered with blushes at the recollection, withdrew abruptly from the window. The cause of her retreat was easily conjectured, and increased the general enthusiasm for a princess who had forgotten her rank in her haste to acknowledge the services of her subjects. The unadorned beauties of the lovely woman, too, moved the military spectators more than the highest display of her regal state might; and what might have seemed too free in her mode of appearing before them was more than atoned for by the enthusiasm of the moment, and by the delicacy evinced in her hasty retreat. Often as the shouts died away, as often were they renewed, till

wood and hill rung again; and many a deep oath was made that morning on the cross of the sword, that the hand should not part with the weapon till Mary Stewart was restored to her rights. But what are promises, what the hopes of mortals? In ten days these gallant and devoted votaries were slain, were captives, or had fled.

Mary flung herself into the nearest seat, and still blushing, yet half-smiling, exclaimed, '*Ma mignonne*, what will they think of me? — to show myself to them with my bare feet hastily thrust into the slippers — only this loose mantle about me — my hair loose on my shoulders — my arms and neck so bare. Oh, the best they can suppose is, that her abode in yonder dungeon has turned their Queen's brain! But my rebel subjects saw me exposed when I was in the depth of affliction, why should I hold colder ceremony with these faithful and loyal men? Call Fleming, however; I trust she has not forgotten the little mail with my apparel. We must be as brave as we can, *mignonne*.'

'Nay, madam, our good Lady Fleming was in no case to remember anything.'

'You jest, Catherine,' said the Queen, somewhat offended; 'it is not in her nature, surely, to forget her duty so far as to leave us without a change of apparel?'

'Roland Græme, madam, took care of that,' answered Catherine; 'for he threw the mail with your Highness's clothes and jewels into the boat, ere he ran back to lock the gate. I never saw so awkward a page as that youth: the packet wellnigh fell on my head.'

'He shall make thy heart amends, my girl,' said Queen Mary, laughing, 'for that and all other offences given. But call Fleming, and let us put ourselves into apparel to meet our faithful lords.'

Such had been the preparations, and such was the skill of Lady Fleming, that the Queen appeared before her assembled nobles in such attire as became, though it could not enhance, her natural dignity. With the most winning courtesy, she expressed to each individual her grateful thanks, and dignified not only every noble, but many of the lesser barons, by her particular attention.

'And whither now, my lords?' she said; 'what way do your counsels determine for us?'

'To Draphane Castle,' replied Lord Arbroath, 'if your Majesty is so pleased; and thence to Dunbarton, to place your

Grace's person in safety, after which we long to prove if these traitors will abide us in the field.'

'And when do we journey?'

'We propose,' said Lord Seyton, 'if your Grace's fatigue will permit, to take horse after the morning's meal.'

'Your pleasure, my lords, is mine,' replied the Queen; 'we will rule our journey by your wisdom now, and hope hereafter to have the advantage of governing by it our kingdom. You will permit my ladies and me, my good lords, to break our fasts along with you; we must be half soldiers ourselves, and set state apart.'

Low bowed many a helmeted head at this gracious proffer, when the Queen, glancing her eyes through the assembled leaders, missed both Douglas and Roland Grème, and inquired for them in a whisper to Catherine Seyton.

'They are in yonder oratory, madam, sad enough,' replied Catherine, and the Queen observed that her favourite's eyes were red with weeping.

'This must not be,' said the Queen. 'Keep the company amused. I will seek them, and introduce them myself.'

She went into the oratory, where the first she met was George Douglas, standing, or rather reclining, in the recess of a window, his back rested against the wall and his arms folded on his breast. At the sight of the Queen he started, and his countenance showed, for an instant, an expression of intense delight, which was instantly exchanged for his usual deep melancholy.

'What means this?' she said. 'Douglas, why does the first deviser and bold executor of the happy scheme for our freedom shun the company of his fellow-nobles, and of the sovereign whom he has obliged?'

'Madam,' replied Douglas, 'those whom your grace with your presence bring followers to aid your cause, wealth to support your state — can offer you halls in which to feast, and impregnable castles for your defence. I am a houseless and homeless man — disinherited by my mother, and laid under her obligation — disowned by my name and kindred — who bring nothing to your standard but a single sword, and the poor life of its owner.'

'Do you mean to upbraid me, Douglas,' replied the Queen, 'by showing what you have lost for my sake?'

'God forbid, madam!' interrupted the young man, eagerly; 'were it to do again, and had I ten times as much rank and wealth, and twenty times as many friends to lose, my losses

would be overpaid by the first step you made, as a free princess, upon the soil of your native kingdom.'

'And what then ails you, that you will not rejoice with those who rejoice upon the same joyful occasion?' said the Queen.

'Madam,' replied the youth, 'though exheridated and disowned, I am yet a Douglas: with most of yonder nobles my family have been in feud for ages — a cold reception amongst them were an insult, and a kind one yet more humiliating.'

'For shame, Douglas,' replied the Queen, 'shake off this unmanly gloom! I can make thee match for the best of them in title and fortune, and, believe me, I will. Go then amongst them, I command you.'

'That word,' said Douglas, 'is enough. I go. This only let me say, that not for wealth or title would I have done that which I have done. Mary Stewart will not, and the Queen cannot, reward me.'

So saying, he left the oratory, mingled with the nobles, and placed himself at the bottom of the table. The Queen looked after him, and put her kerchief to her eyes.

'Now, Our Lady pity me,' she said, 'for no sooner are my prison cares ended than those which beset me as a woman and a queen again thicken around me. Happy Elizabeth! to whom political interest is everything, and whose heart never betrays thy head. And now must I seek this other boy, if I would prevent daggers-drawing betwixt him and the young Seyton.'

Roland Græme was in the same oratory, but at such a distance from Douglas, that he could not overhear what passed betwixt the Queen and him. He also was moody and thoughtful, but cleared his brow at the Queen's question, 'How now, Roland? you are negligent in your attendance this morning. Are you so much overcome with your night's ride?'

'Not so, gracious madam,' answered Græme; 'but I am told the page of Lochleven is not the page of Niddrie Castle; and so Master Henry Seyton hath in a manner been pleased to supersede my attendance.'

'Now, Heaven forgive me,' said the Queen, 'how soon these cock-chickens begin to spar! With children and boys, at least, I may be a queen. I will have you friends. Some one send me Henry Seyton hither.' As she spoke the last words aloud, the youth whom she had named entered the apartment. 'Come hither,' she said, 'Henry Seyton. I will have you give your hand to this youth, who so well aided in the plan of my escape.'

'Willingly, madam,' answered Seyton, 'so that the youth will grant me, as a boon, that he touch not the hand of another Seyton whom he knows of. My hal. has passed current for hers with him before now; and to win my friendship, he must give up thoughts of my sister's love.'

'Henry Seyton,' said the Queen, 'does it become you to add any condition to my command?'

'Madam,' said Henry, 'I am the servant of your Grace's throne, son to the most loyal man in Scotland. Our goods, our castles, our blood, are yours; our honour is in our own keeping. I could say more, but —'

'Nay, speak on, rude boy,' said the Queen; 'what avails it that I am released from Lochleven, if I am thus enthralled under the yoke of my pretended deliverers, and prevented from doing justice to one who has deserved as well of me as yourself?'

'Be not in this distemperature for me, sovereign lady,' said Roland; 'this young gentleman, being the faithful servant of your Grace, and the brother of Catherine Seyton, bars that about him which will charm down my passion at the hottest.'

'I warn thee once more,' said Henry Seyton, haughtily, 'that you make no speech which may infer that the daughter of Lord Seyton can be aught to thee beyond what she is to every churl's blood in Scotland.'

The Queen was again about to interfere, for Roland's complexion rose, and it became somewhat questionable how long his love for Catherine would suppress the natural fire of his temper. But the interposition of another person, hitherto unseen, prevented Mary's interference. There was in the oratory a separate shrine, inclosed with a high screen of pierced oak, within which was placed an image of St. Bennet, of peculiar sanctity. From this recess, in which she had been probably engaged in her devotions, issued suddenly Magdalen Graeme, and addressed Henry Seyton, in reply to his last offensive expressions — 'And of what clay, then, are they moulded these Seytons, that the blood of the Graemes may not aspire to mingle with theirs? Know, proud boy, that when I call this youth my daughter's child, I affirm his descent from Malise Earl of Strathern, called Malise with the Bright Brand; and I trow the blood of your house springs from no higher source.'

'Good mother,' said Seyton, 'methinks your sanctity should make you superior to these worldly vanities; and indeed it seems to have rendered you somewhat oblivious touching them,

since, to be of gentle descent, the father's name and lineage must be as well qualified as the mother's.'

'And if I say he comes of the blood of Avenel by the father's side,' replied Magdalen Græme, 'name I not blood as richly coloured as thine own?'

'Of Avenel!' said the Queen; 'is my page descended of Avenel?'

'Ay, gracious Princess, and the last male heir of that ancient house. Julian Avenel was his father, who fell in battle against the Southron.'

'I have heard the tale of sorrow,' said the Queen; 'it was thy daughter, then, who followed that unfortunate baron to the field, and died on his body? Alas! how many ways does woman's affection find to work out her own misery! The tale has oft been told and sung in hall and bower. And thou, Roland, art that child of misfortune, who was left among the dead and dying? Henry Seyton, he is thine equal in blood and birth.'

'Scarcely so,' said Henry Seyton, 'even were he legitimate; but if the tale be told and sung aright, Julian Avenel was a false knight, and his leman a frail and credulous maiden.'

'Now, by Heaven, thou liest!' said Roland Græme, and laid his hand on his sword. The entrance of Lord Seyton, however, prevented violence.

'Save me, my lord,' said the Queen, 'and separate these wild and untamed spirits.'

'How, Henry!' said the baron, 'are my castle and the Queen's presence no checks on thine insolence and impetuosity? And with whom art thou brawling? Unless my eyes spell that token false, it is with the very youth who aided me so gallantly in the skirmish with the Leslies. Let me look, fair youth, at the medal which thou wearest in thy cap. By St. Bennet, it is the same! Henry, I command thee to forbear him, as thou lovest my blessing —'

'And as you honour my command,' said the Queen; 'good service hath he done me.'

'Ay, madam,' replied young Seyton, 'as when he carried the billet, inclosed in the sword-sheath, to Lochleven. Marry, the good youth knew no more than a pack-horse what he was carrying.'

'But I, who dedicated him to this great work,' said Magdalen Græme — 'I, by whose advice and agency this just heir hath been unloosed from her thralldom — I, who spared not the last

remaining hope of a falling house in this great action — I, at least, knew and counselled ; and what merit may be mine, let the reward, most gracious Queen, descend upon this youth. My ministry here is ended : you are free — a sovereign princess at the head of a gallant army, surrounded by valiant barons. My service could avail you no farther, but might well prejudice you ; your fortune now rests upon men's hearts and men's swords. May they prove as trusty as the faith of women !'

'You will not leave us, mother,' said the Queen — 'you whose practices in our favour were so powerful, who dared so many dangers, and wore so many disguises, to blind our enemies and to confirm our friends — you will not leave us in the dawn of our reviving fortunes, ere we have time to know and to thank you ?'

'You cannot know her,' answered Magdalen Graeme, 'who knows not herself : there are times when, in this woman's frame of mind, there is the strength of him of Gath ; in this overtoiled brain, the wisdom of the most sage counsellor : and again the mist is on me, and my strength is weakness, my wisdom folly. I have spoken before princes and cardinals — ay, noble Princess, even before the princes of thine own house of Lorraine — and I know not whence the words of persuasion came which flowed from my lips, and were drunk in by their ears. And now, even when I most need words of persuasion, there is something which chokes my voice and robs me of utterance.'

'If there be aught in my power to do thee pleasure,' said the Queen, 'the barely naming it shall avail as well as all thine eloquence.'

'Sovereign lady,' replied the enthusiast, 'it shames me that at this high moment something of human frailty should cling to one whose vows the saints have heard, whose labours in the rightful cause Heaven has prospered. But it will be thus, while the living spirit is shrined in the clay of mortality. I will yield to the folly,' she said, weeping as she spoke, 'and it shall be the last.' Then seizing Roland's hand, she led him to the Queen's feet, kneeling herself upon one knee, and causing him to kneel on both. 'Mighty Princess,' she said, 'look on this flower — it was found by a kindly stranger on a bloody field of battle, and long it was ere my anxious eyes saw, and my arms pressed, all that was left of my only daughter. For your sake, and for that of the holy faith we both profess, I could leave this plant, while it was yet tender, to the nurture of strangers — ay, of enemies, by whom, perchance, his blood would have been poured forth as wine, had the heretic Glendinning known that

he had in his house the heir of Julian Avenel. Since then I have seen him only in a few hours of doubt and dread, and now I part with the child of my love — for ever — for ever! Oh, for every weary step I have made in your rightful cause, in this and in foreign lands, give protection to the child whom I must no more call mine!

'I swear to you, mother,' said the Queen, deeply affected, 'that, for your sake and his own, his happiness and fortune shall be our charge!'

'I thank you, daughter of princes,' said Magdalen, and pressed her lips, first to the Queen's hand, then to the brow of her grandson. 'And now,' she said, drying her tears, and rising with dignity, 'earth has had its own, and Heaven claims the rest. Lioness of Scotland, go forth and conquer! and if the prayers of a devoted votaress can avail thee, they will rise in many a land, and from many a distant shrine. I will glide like a ghost from land to land, from temple to temple; and where the very name of my country is unknown, the priests shall ask who is the queen of that distant northern clime, for whom the aged pilgrim was so fervent in prayer. Farewell! Honour be thine, and earthly prosperity, if it be the will of God; if not, may the penance thou shalt do here ensure thee happiness hereafter! Let no one speak or follow me — my resolution is taken — my vow cannot be cancelled.'

She glided from their presence as she spoke, and her last look was upon her beloved grandchild. He would have risen and followed, but the Queen and Lord Seyton interfered.

'Press not on her now,' said Lord Seyton, 'if you would not lose her for ever. Many a time have we seen the sainted mother, and often at the most needful moment; but to press on her privacy, or to thwart her purpose, is a crime which she cannot pardon. I trust we shall yet see her at her need — a holy woman she is for certain, and dedicated wholly to prayer and penance; and hence the heretics hold her as one distracted, while true Catholics deem her a saint.'

'Let me then hope,' said the Queen, 'that you, my lord, will aid me in the execution of her last request.'

'What! in the protection of my young second? — cheerfully — that is, in all that your Majesty can think it fitting to ask of me. Henry, give thy hand upon the instant to Roland Avenel, for so I presume he must now be called.'

'And shall be lord of the barony,' said the Queen, 'if God prosper our rightful arms.'

'It can only be to restore it to my kind protectress, who now holds it,' said young Avenel. 'I would rather be landless all my life than she lost a rood of ground by me.'

'Nay,' said the Queen, looking to Lord Seyton, 'his mind matches his birth. Henry, thou hast not yet given thy hand.'

'It is his,' said Henry, giving it with some appearance of courtesy, but whispering Roland at the same time, 'For all this thou hast not my sister's.'

'May it please your Grace,' said Lord Seyton, 'now that these passages are over, to honour our poor meal. Time it were that our banners were reflected in the Clyde. We must to horse with as little delay as may be.'

CHAPTER XXXVII

Ay, sir — our ancient crown, in these wild times,
Oft stood upon a cast ; the gamester's ducat,
So often staked, and lost, and then regain'd,
Scarce knew so many hazards.

The Spanish Father.

IT is not our object to enter into the historical part of the reign of the ill-fated Mary, or to recount how, during the week which succeeded her flight from Lochleven, her partizans mustered around her with their followers, forming a gallant army, amounting to six thousand men. So much light has been lately thrown on the most minute details of the period by Mr. Chalmers, in his valuable *History of Queen Mary*, that the reader may be safely referred to it for the fullest information which ancient records afford concerning that interesting time. It is sufficient for our purpose to say, that while Mary's headquarters were at Hamilton, the Regent and his adherents had, in the King's name, assembled a host at Glasgow, inferior indeed to that of the Queen in numbers, but formidable from the military talents of Murray, Morton, the Laird of Grange, and others, who had been trained from their youth in foreign and domestic wars.

In these circumstances, it was the obvious policy of Queen Mary to avoid a conflict, secure that, were her person once in safety, the number of her adherents must daily increase ; whereas, the forces of those opposed to her must, as had frequently happened in the previous history of her reign, have diminished, and their spirits become broken. And so evident was this to her counsellors, that they resolved their first step should be to place the Queen in the strong castle of Dunbarton, there to await the course of events, the arrival of succours from France, and the levies which were made by her adherents in every province of Scotland. Accordingly, orders were given that all men should be on horseback or on foot, apparelled in

their armour, and ready to follow the Queen's standard in array of battle, the avowed determination being to escort her to the castle of Dunbarton in defiance of her enemies.

The muster was made upon Hamilton Moor, and the march commenced in all the pomp of feudal times. Military music sounded, banners and pennons waved, armour glittered far and wide, and spears glanced and twinkled like stars in a frosty sky. The gallant spectacle of warlike parade was on this occasion dignified by the presence of the Queen herself, who, with a fair retinue of ladies and household attendants, and a special guard of gentlemen, amongst whom young Seyton and Roland were distinguished, gave grace at once and confidence to the army, which spread its ample files before, around, and behind her. Many churchmen also joined the cavalcade, most of whom did not scruple to assume arms, and declare their intention of wielding them in defence of Mary and the Catholic faith. Not so the abbot of St. Mary's. Roland had not seen this prelate since the night of their escape from Lochleven, and he now beheld him, robed in the dress of his order, assume his station near the Queen's person. Roland hastened to pull off his basnet, and beseech the abbot's blessing.

'Thou hast it, my son!' said the priest; 'I see thee now under thy true name, and in thy rightful garb. The helmet with the holly-branch befits your brows well. I have long waited for the hour thou shouldst assume it.'

'Then you knew of my descent, my good father?' said Roland.

'I did so, but it was under seal of confession from thy grandmother; nor was I at liberty to tell the secret till she herself should make it known.'

'Her reason for such secrecy, my father?' said Roland Avenel.

'Fear, perchance, of my brother — a mistaken fear, for Halbert would not, to ensure himself a kingdom, have offered wrong to an orphan; besides that your title, in quiet times, even had your father done your mother that justice which I well hope he did, could not have competed with that of my brother's wife, the child of Julian's elder brother.'

'They need fear no competition from me,' said Avenel. 'Scotland is wide enough, and there are many manors to win, without plundering my benefactor. But prove to me, my reverend father, that my father was just to my mother; show me that I may call myself a legitimate Avenel, and make me your bounden slave for ever!'

'Ay,' replied the abbot, 'I hear the Seytons hold thee cheap for that stain on thy shield. Something, however, I have learnt from the late Abbot Boniface, which, if it prove sooth, may redeem that reproach.'

'Tell me that blessed news,' said Roland, 'and the future service of my life —'

'Rash boy!' said the abbot, 'I should but madden thine impatient temper by exciting hopes that may never be fulfilled, and is this a time for them? Think on what perilous march we are bound, and if thou hast a sin unconfessed, neglect not the only leisure which Heaven may perchance afford thee for confession and absolution.'

'There will be time enough for both, I trust, when we reach Dunbarton,' answered the page.

'Ay,' said the abbot, 'thou crowest as loudly as the rest; but we are not yet at Dunbarton, and there is a lion in the path.'

'Mean you Murray, Morton, and the other rebels at Glasgow, my reverend father? Tush! they dare not look on the royal banner.'

'Even so,' replied the abbot, 'speak many of those who are older, and should be wiser, than thou. I have returned from the southern shires, where I left many a chief of name arming in the Queen's interest. I left the lords here wise and considerate men; I find them madmen on my return: they are willing, for mere pride and vainglory, to brave the enemy, and to carry the Queen, as it were in triumph, past the walls of Glasgow, and under the beards of the adverse army. Seldom does Heaven smile on such mistimed confidence. We shall be encountered, and that to the purpose.'

'And so much the better,' replied Roland; 'the field of battle was my cradle.'

'Beware it be not thy dying-bed,' said the abbot. 'But what avails it whispering to young wolves the dangers of the chase? You will know, perchance, ere this day is out, what yonder men are, whom you hold in rash contempt.'

'Why, what are they?' said Henry Seyton, who now joined them. 'Have they sinews of wire and flesh of iron? Will lead pierce and steel cut them? If so, reverend father, we have little to fear.'

'They are evil men,' said the abbot, 'but the trade of war demands no saints. Murray and Morton are known to be the best generals in Scotland. No one ever saw Lindesay's or

Ruthven's back. Kirkcaldy of Grange was named by the Constable Montmorency the first soldier in Europe. My brother, too good a name for such a cause, has been far and wide known for a soldier.'

'The better — the better!' said Seyton, triumphantly; 'we shall have all these traitors of rank and name in a fair field before us. Our cause is the best, our numbers are the strongest, our hearts and limbs match theirs. St. Bennet, and set on!'

The abbot made no reply, but seemed lost in reflection; and his anxiety in some measure communicated itself to Roland Avenel, who ever, as their line of march led over a ridge or an eminence, cast an anxious look towards the towers of Glasgow, as if he expected to see symptoms of the enemy issuing forth. It was not that he feared the fight, but the issue was of such deep import to his country and to himself that the natural fire of his spirit burned with a less lively, though with a more intense, glow. Love, honour, fame, fortune, all seemed to depend on the issue of one field, rashly hazarded perhaps, but now likely to become unavoidable and decisive.

When, at length, their march came to be nearly parallel with the city of Glasgow, Roland became sensible that the high grounds before them were already in part occupied by a force, showing, like their own, the royal banner of Scotland, and on the point of being supported by columns of infantry and squadrons of horse, which the city gates had poured forth, and which hastily advanced to sustain those troops who already possessed the ground in front of the Queen's forces. Horseman after horseman galloped in from the advanced guard, with tidings that Murray had taken the field with his whole army; that his object was to intercept the Queen's march, and his purpose unquestionable to hazard a battle. It was now that the tempers of men were subjected to a sudden and a severe trial; and that those who had too presumptuously concluded that they would pass without combat were something disconcerted, when, at once, and with little time to deliberate, they found themselves placed in front of a resolute enemy. Their chiefs immediately assembled around the Queen, and held a hasty council of war. Mary's quivering lip confessed the fear which she endeavoured to conceal under a bold and dignified demeanour. But her efforts were overcome by painful recollections of the disastrous issue of her last appearance in arms at Carberry Hill; and, when she went to have asked them their

advice for ordering the battle, she involuntarily inquired whether there were no means of escaping without an engagement?

'Escaping!' answered the Lord Seyton. 'When I stand as one to ten of your Highness's enemies, I may think of escape, but never while I stand with three to two!'

'Battle! — battle!' exclaimed the assembled lords; 'we will drive the rebels from their vantage ground, as the hound turns the hare on the hillside.'

'Methinks, my noble lords,' said the abbot, 'it were as well to prevent his gaining that advantage. Our road lies through yonder hamlet on the brow, and whichever party hath the luck to possess it with its little gardens and inclosures, will attain a post of great defence.'

'The reverend father is right,' said the Queen. 'Oh, haste thee, Seyton — haste, and get hither before them; they are marching like the wind.'

Seyton bowed low, and turned his horse's head. 'Your Highness honours me,' he said; 'I will instantly press forward and seize the pass.'

'Not before me, my lord, whose charge is the command of the vanguard,' said the Lord of Arbroath.

'Before you, or any Hamilton in Scotland,' said the Seyton, 'having the Queen's command. Follow me, gentlemen, my vassals and kinsmen. St. Bennet, and set on!'

'And follow me,' said Arbroath, 'my noble kinsmen and brave men-tenants; we will see which will first reach the post of danger. For God and Queen Mary!'

'Ill-omened haste and most unhappy strife,' said the abbot, who saw them and their followers rush hastily and emulously to ascend the height, without waiting till their men were placed in order. 'And you, gentlemen,' he continued, addressing Roland and Seyton, who were each about to follow those who hastened thus disorderly to the conflict, 'will you leave the Queen's person unguarded?'

'Oh, leave me not, gentlemen!' said the Queen — 'Roland and Seyton, do not leave me; there are enough of arms to strike in this fell combat — withdraw not those to whom I trust for my safety!'

'We may not leave her Grace,' said Roland, looking at Seyton, and turning his horse.

'I ever looked when thou wouldst find out that,' rejoined the fiery youth.

Itoland made no answer, but bit his lip till the blood came, and spurring his horse up to the side of Catherine Seyton's palfrey, he whispered in a low voice, 'I never thought to have done aught to deserve you ; but this day I have heard myself upbraided with cowardice, and my sword remained still sheathed, and all for the love of you.'

'There is madness among us all,' said the damsel : 'my father, my brother, and you are all alike bereft of reason. Ye should think only of this poor Queen, and you are all inspired by your own absurd jealousies. The monk is the only soldier and man of sense amongst you all. My lord abbot,' she cried aloud, 'were it not better we should draw to the westward, and wait the event that God shall send us, instead of remaining here in the highway, endangering the Queen's person, and cumbering the troops in their advance?'

'You say well, my daughter,' replied the abbot ; 'had we but one to guide us where the Queen's person may be in safety ! Our nobles hurry to the conflict, without casting a thought on the very cause of the war.'

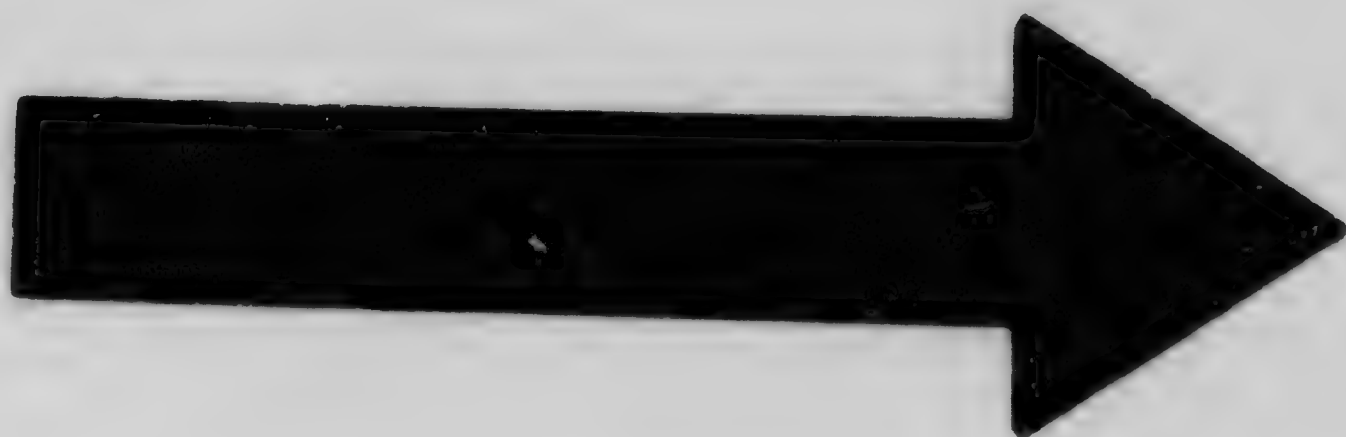
'Follow me,' said a knight, or man-at-arms, well mounted, and attired completely in black armour, but having the visor of his helmet closed, and bearing no crest on his helmet, or device upon his shield.

'We will follow no stranger,' said the abbot, 'without some warrant of his truth.'

'I am a stranger and in your hands,' said the horseman ; 'if you wish to know more of me, the Queen herself will be your warrant.'

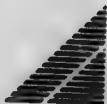
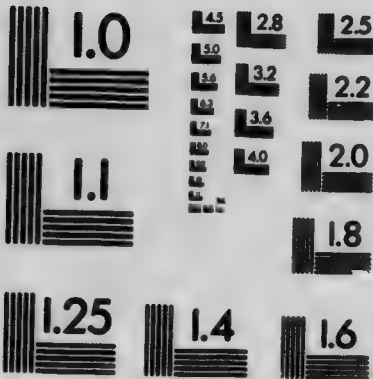
The Queen had remained fixed to the spot, as if disabled by fear, yet mechanically smiling, bowing, and waving her hand, as banners were lowered and spears depressed before her, while, emulating the strife betwixt Seyton and Arbroath, band on band pressed forward their march towards the enemy. Scarce, however, had the black rider whispered something in her ear, than she assented to what he said ; and when he spoke aloud, and with an air of command, 'Gentlemen, it is the Queen's pleasure that you should follow me,' Mary uttered, with something like eagerness, the word 'Yes.'

All were in motion in an instant ; for the black horseman, throwing off a sort of apathy of manner which his first appearance indicated, spurred his horse to and fro, making him take such active bounds and short turns as showed the rider master of the animal ; and getting the Queen's little retinue in some



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order for marching, he led them to the left, directing his course towards a castle, which, crowning a gentle yet commanding eminence, presented an extensive view over the country beneath, and, in particular, commanded a view of those heights which both armies hastened to occupy, and which it was now apparent must almost instantly be the scene of struggle and dispute.

'Yonder towers,' said the abbot, questioning the sable horseman, 'to whom do they belong? and are they now in the hands of friends?'

'They are untenanted,' replied the stranger, 'or, at least, they have no hostile inmates. But urge these youths, sir abbot, to make more haste; this is but an evil time to satisfy their idle curiosity, by peering out upon the battle in which they are to take no share.'

'The worse luck mine,' said Henry Seyton, who overheard him; 'I would rather be under my father's banner at this moment than be made chamberlain of Holyrood, for this my present duty of peaceful ward well and patiently discharged.'

'Your place under your father's banner will shortly be right dangerous,' said Roland Avenel, who, pressing his horse towards the westward, had still his look reverted to the armies; 'for I see yonder body of cavalry which presses from the eastward will reach the village ere Lord Seyton can gain it.'

'They are but cavalry,' said Seyton, looking attentively; 'they cannot hold the village without shot of harquebuss.'

'Look more closely,' said Roland; 'you will see that each of these horsemen who advance so rapidly from Glasgow carries a footman behind him.'

'Now, by Heaven, he speaks well!' said the black cavalier; 'one of you two must go carry the news to Lord Seyton and Lord Arbroath, that they hasten not their horsemen on before the foot, but advance more regularly.'

'Be that my errand,' said Roland, 'for I first marked the stratagem of the enemy.'

'But, by your leave,' said Seyton, 'yonder is my father's banner engaged, and it best becomes me to go to the rescue.'

'I will stand by the Queen's decision,' said Roland Avenel.

'What new appeal?—what new quarrel?' said Queen Mary. 'Are there not in yonder dark host enemies enough to Mary Stewart, but must her very friends turn enemies to each other?'

'Nay, madam,' said Roland, 'the young Master of Seyton and I did but dispute who should leave your person to do a most needful message to the host. He thought his rank entitled

him, and I deemed that the person of least consequence, being myself, were better perilled ——'

'Not so,' said the Queen; 'if one must leave me, be it Seyton.'

Henry Seyton bowed till the white plumes on his helmet mixed with the flowing mane of his gallant war-horse, then placed himself firm in the saddle, shook his lance aloft with an air of triumph and determination, and striking his horse with the spurs, made towards his father's banner, which was still advancing up the hill, and dashed his steed over every obstacle that occurred in his headlong path.

'My brother! my father!' exclaimed Catherine, with an expression of agonised apprehension — 'they are in the midst of peril, and I in safety!'

'Would to God,' said Roland, 'that I were with them, and could ransom every drop of their blood by two of mine!'

'Do I not know thou dost wish it?' said Catherine. 'Can a woman say to a man what I have wellnigh said to thee, and yet think that he could harbour fear or faintness of heart? There is that in yon distant sound of approaching battle that pleases me even while it affrights me. I would I were a man, that I might feel that stern delight without the mixture of terror!'

'Ride up — ride up, Lady Catherine Seyton,' cried the abbot, as they still swept on at a rapid pace, and were now close beneath the walls of the castle — 'ride up, and aid Lady Fleming to support the Queen — she gives way more and more.'

They halted and lifted Mary from the saddle, and were about to support her towards the castle, when she said faintly, 'Not there — not there: these walls will I never enter more!'

'Be a queen, madam,' said the abbot, 'and forget that you are a woman.'

'Oh, I must forget much — much more,' answered the unfortunate Mary, in an undertone, 'ere I can look with steady eyes on these well-known scenes! I must forget the days which I spent here as the bride of the lost — the murdered ——'

'This is the Castle of Crookstone,' said the Lady Fleming, 'in which the Queen held her first court after she was married to Darnley.'

'Heaven,' said the abbot, 'Thy hand is upon us! Bear yet up, madam; your foes are the foes of Holy Church, and God will this day decide whether Scotland shall be Catholic or heretic.'

A heavy and continued fire of cannon and musketry bore a tremendous burden to his words, and seemed far more than they to recall the spirits of the Queen.

'To yonder tree,' she said, pointing to a yew-tree which grew on a small mount close to the castle; 'I know it well from thence you may see a prospect wide as from the peaks of Schehallion.'

And freeing herself from her assistants, she walked with a determined, yet somewhat wild, step up to the stem of the noble yew. The abbot, Catherine, and Roland Avenel followed her, while Lady Fleming kept back the inferior persons of her train. The black horseman also followed the Queen, waiting on her as closely as the shadow upon the light, but ever remaining at the distance of two or three yards; he folded his arms on his bosom, turned his back to the battle, and seemed solely occupied by gazing on Mary through the bars of his closed visor. The Queen regarded him not, but fixed her eyes upon the spreading yew.

'Ay, fair and stately tree,' she said, as if at the sight of it she had been rapt away from the present scene, and had overcome the horror which had oppressed her at the first approach to Crookstone, 'there thou standest, gay and goodly as ever, though thou hearest the sounds of war instead of the vows of love. All is gone since I last greeted thee — love and lover — vows and vower — king and kingdom. How goes the field, my lord abbot? with us, I trust; yet what but evil can Mary's eyes witness from this spot?'

Her attendants eagerly bent their eyes on the field of battle, but could discover nothing more than that it was obstinately contested. The small inclosures and cottage gardens in the village, of which they had a full and commanding view, and which shortly before lay, with their lines of sycamore and ash-trees, so still and quiet in the mild light of a May sun, were now each converted into a line of fire, canopied by smoke; and the sustained and constant report of the musketry and cannon, mingled with the shouts of meeting combatants, showed that as yet neither party had given ground.

'Many a soul finds its final departure to heaven or hell in these awful thunders,' said the abbot; 'let those that believe in the Holy Church join me in orisons for victory in this dreadful combat.'

'Not here — not here,' said the unfortunate Queen — 'pray not here, father, or pray in silence; my mind is too much torn

between the past and the present to dare to approach the Heavenly throne. Or, if ye will pray, be it for one whose fondest affections have been her greatest crimes, and who has ceased to be a queen only because she was a deceived and a tender-hearted woman.'

'Were it not well,' said Roland, 'that I rode somewhat nearer the hosts, and saw the fate of the day?'

'Do so, in the name of God,' said the abbot; 'for if our friends are scattered, our flight must be hasty; but beware thou approach not too nigh the conflict: there is more than thine own life depends on thy safe return.'

'Oh, go not too nigh,' said Catherine; 'but fail not to see how the Seytons fight, and how they bear themselves.'

'Fear nothing, I will be on my guard,' said Roland Avenel; and without waiting further answer, rode towards the scene of conflict, keeping, as he rode, the higher and uninclosed ground, and ever looking cautiously around him, for fear of involving himself in some hostile party. As he approached, the shots rung sharp and more sharply on his ear, the shouts came wilder and wilder, and he felt that thick beating of the heart, that mixture of natural apprehension, intense curiosity, and anxiety for the dubious event, which even the bravest experience when they approach alone to a scene of interest and of danger.

At length he drew so close that, from a bank, screened by bushes and underwood, he could distinctly see where the struggle was most keenly maintained. This was in a hollow way, leading to the village, up which the Queen's vanguard had marched, with more hasty courage than well-advised conduct, for the purpose of possessing themselves of that post of advantage. 'They found their scheme anticipated' and the hedges and inclosures already occupied by the enemy, led by the celebrated Kirkealdy of Grange and the Earl of Morton; and not small was the loss which they sustained while struggling forward to come to close with the men-at-arms on the other side. But, as the Queen's followers were chiefly noblemen and barons, with their kinsmen and followers, they had pressed onward, contemning obstacles and danger, and had, when Roland arrived on the ground, met hand to hand at the gorge of the pass with the Regent's vanguard, and endeavoured to bear them out of the village and spear-point; while their foes, equally determined to keep the advantage which they had attained, struggled with the like obstinacy to drive back the assailants.

Both parties were on foot, and armed in proof; so that, when

the long lances of the front ranks were fixed in each other's shields, corslets, and breastplates, the struggle resembled that of two bulls, who, fixing their frontlets hard against each other, remain in that posture for hours, until the superior strength or obstinacy of the one compels the other to take to flight, or bears him down to the earth. Thus locked together in the deadly struggle, which swayed slowly to and fro, as one or other party gained the advantage, those who fell were trampled on alike by friends and foes; those whose weapons were broken retired from the front rank, and had their place supplied by others; while the rearward ranks, unable otherwise to share in the combat, fired their pistols, and hurled their daggers, and the points and truncheons of the broken weapons, like javelins against the enemy.

'God and the Queen!' resounded from the one party; 'God and the King!' thundered from the other; while, in the name of their sovereign, fellow-subjects on both sides shed each other's blood, and, in the name of their Creator, defaced His image. Amid the tumult was often heard the voices of the captains shouting their commands, of leaders and chiefs crying their gathering words, of groans and shrieks from the falling and the dying.

The strife had lasted nearly an hour. The strength of both parties seemed exhausted; but their rage was unabated, and their obstinacy unsubdued, when Roland, who turned eye and ear to all around him, saw a column of infantry, headed by a few horsemen, wheel round the base of the bank where he had stationed himself, and, levelling their long lances, attack the flank of the Queen's vanguard, closely engaged as they were in conflict on their front. The very first glance showed him that the leader who directed this movement was the Knight of Avenel, his ancient master; and the next convinced him that its effects would be decisive. The result of the attack of fresh and unbroken forces upon the flank of those already wearied with a long and obstinate struggle was, indeed, instantaneous.

The column of the assailants, which had hitherto shown one dark, dense, and united line of helmets, surmounted with plumage, was at once broken and hurled in confusion down the hill, which they had so long endeavoured to gain. In vain were the leaders heard calling upon their followers to stand to the combat, and seen personally resisting when all resistance was evidently vain. They were slain, or felled to the earth, or hurried backwards by the mingled tide of flight and pursuit. What were

Roland's thoughts on beholding the rout, and feeling that all that remained for him was to turn bridle, and endeavour to ensure the safety of the Queen's person! Yet, keen as his grief and shame might be, they were both forgotten when, almost close beneath the bank which he occupied, he saw Henry Seyton forced away from his own party in the tumult, covered with dust and blood, and defending himself desperately against several of the enemy who had gathered around him, attracted by his gay armour. Roland paused not a moment, but pushing his steed down the bank, leaped him amongst the hostile party, dealt three or four blows amongst them, which struck down two and made the rest stand aloof, then reaching Seyton his hand, he exhorted him to seize fast on his horse's mane.

'We live or die together this day,' said he; 'keep but fast hold till we are out of the press, and then my horse is yours.'

Seyton heard, and exerted his remaining strength, and, by their joint efforts, Roland brought him out of danger, and behind the spot from whence he had witnessed the disastrous conclusion of the fight. But no sooner were they under shelter of the trees than Seyton let go his hold, and, in spite of Roland's efforts to support him, fell at length on the turf. 'Trouble yourself no more with me,' he said, 'this is my first and my last battle, and I have already seen too much to wish to see the close. Hasten to save the Queen — and commend me to Catherine; she will never more be mistaken for me nor I for her — the last sword-stroke has made an eternal distinction.'

'Let me aid you to mount my horse,' said Roland, eagerly, 'and you may yet be saved. I can find my own way on foot. Turn but my horse's head westward, and he will carry you fleet and easy as the wind.'

'I will never mount steed more,' said the youth; 'farewell! I love thee better dying than ever I thought to have done while in life. I would that old man's blood were not on my hand! *Sancte Benedicte, ora pro me!* Stand not to look on a dying man, but haste to save the Queen!'

These words were spoken with the last effort of his voice, and scarce were they uttered ere the speaker was no more. They recalled Roland to a sense of the duty which he had wellnigh forgotten, but they did not reach his ears only.

'The Queen — where is the Queen?' said Halbert Glen-dinning, who, followed by two or three horsemen, appeared at this instant. Roland made no answer, but turning his horse, and confiding in his speed, gave him at once rein and spu and

rode over height and hollow towards the Castle of Crookstone. More heavily armed, and mounted upon a horse of less speed, Sir Halbert Glendinning followed with couched lance, calling out as he rode, 'Sir with the holly-branch, halt, and show your right to bear that badge : fly not thus cowardly, nor dishonour the cognizance thou deservest not to wear ! Halt, sir coward, or, by Heaven, I will strike thee with my lance on the back, and slay thee like a dastard. I am the Knight of Avenel — I am Halbert Glendinning.'

But Roland, who had no purpose of encountering his old master, and who, besides, knew the Queen's safety depended on his making the best speed he could, answered not a word to the defiance and reproaches which Sir Halbert continued to throw out against him ; but making the best use of his spurs, rode yet harder than before, and had gained about a hundred yards upon his pursuer, when, coming near to the yew-tree where he had left the Queen, he saw them already getting to horse, and cried out as loud as he could, 'Foes ! — foes ! Ride for it, fair ladies. Brave gentlemen, do your devoir to protect them !'

So saying, he wheeled his horse, and avoiding the shock of Sir Halbert Glendinning, charged one of that knight's followers, who was nearly on a line with him, so rudely with his lance that he overthrew horse and man. He then drew his sword and attacked the second, while the black man-at-arms, throwing himself in the way of Glendinning, they rushed on each other so fiercely that both horses were overthrown, and the riders lay rolling on the plain. Neither was able to arise, for the black horseman was pierced through with Glendinning's lance, and the Knight of Avenel, oppressed with the weight of his own horse, and sorely bruised besides, seemed in little better plight than he whom he had mortally wounded.

'Yield thee, Sir Knight of Avenel, rescue or no rescue,' said Roland, who had put a second antagonist out of condition to combat, and hastened to prevent Glendinning from renewing the conflict.

'I may not choose but yield,' said Sir Halbert, 'since I can no longer fight ; but it shames me to speak such a word to a coward like thee !'

'Call me not coward,' said Roland, lifting his visor, and helping his prisoner to rise, 'since but for old kindness at thy hands, and yet more at thy lady's, I had met thee as a brave man should.'

'The favourite page of my wife !' said Sir Halbert, astonished.

'Ah! wretched boy, I have heard of thy treason at Lochleven.'

'Reproach him not, my brother,' said the abbot, 'he was but an agent in the hands of Heaven.'

'To horse — to horse!' said Catherine Seyton; 'mount and be gone, or we are all lost. I see our gallant army flying for many a league. To horse, my lord abbot! To horse, Roland! My gracious liege, to horse! Ere this, we should have ridden many a mile.'

'Look on these features,' said Mary, pointing to the dying knight, who had been unhelmed by some compassionate hand — 'look there, and tell me if she who ruins all who love her ought to fly a foot farther to save her wretched life!'

The reader must have long anticipated the discovery which the Queen's feelings had made before her eyes confirmed it. It was the features of the unhappy George Douglas, on which death was stamping his mark.

'Look — look at him well,' said the Queen, 'thus has it been with all who loved Mary Stewart! The royalty of Francis, the wit of Chastelar, the power and gallantry of the gay Gordon, the melody of Rizzio, the portly form and youthful grace of Darnley, the bold address and courtly manners of Bothwell, and now the deep-devoted passion of the noble Douglas — nought could save them: they looked on the wretched Mary, and to have loved her was crime enough to deserve early death! No sooner had the victims formed a kind thought of me than the poisoned cup, the axe and block, the dagger, the mine were ready to punish them for casting away affection on such a wretch as I am! Importune me not: I will fly no farther. I can die but once and I will die here.'

While she spoke, tears fell fast on the face of the dying man, who could not fix his eyes on her with an eagerness of passion which his self could hardly subdue. 'Mourn not for me,' he said, 'but care for your own safety. I die in mine armour as a Douglas should, and I die pitied by Mary Stewart!'

He expired with these words, and without withdrawing his eyes from her face; and the Queen, whose heart was of that soft and gentle mould which in domestic life, and with a more suitable partner than Darnley, might have made her happy, remained weeping by the dead man, until recalled to herself by the abbot, who found it necessary to use a style of unusual remonstrance. 'We also, madam,' he said — 'we, your Grace's

devoted followers, have friends and relatives to weep for. I leave a brother in imminent jeopardy — the husband of the Lady Fleming — the father and brother of the Lady Catherine, are all in yonder bloody field, slain, it is to be feared, or prisoners. We forget the fate of our own nearest and dearest to wait on our Queen, and she is too much occupied with her own sorrows to give one thought to ours.

'I deserve not your reproach, father,' said the Queen, checking her tears; 'but I am docile to it. Where must we go? what must we do?'

'We must fly, and that instantly,' said the abbot; 'whither is not so easily answered, but we may dispute it upon the road. Lift her to her saddle, and set forward.'

They set off accordingly. Roland lingered a moment to command the attendants of the Knight of Avenel to convey their master to the Castle of Crookstone, and to say that he demanded from him no other condition of liberty than his word that he and his followers would keep secret the direction in which the Queen fled. As he turned his rein to depart, the honest countenance of Adam Woodcock stared upon him with an expression of surprise which, at another time, would have excited his hearty mirth. He had been one of the followers who had experienced the weight of Roland's arm, and the now knew each other, Roland having put up his visor, and the good yeoman having thrown away his barret-cap, with the iron bars in front, that he might the more readily assist his master. Into this barret-cap, as it lay on the ground, Roland forgot not to drop a few gold pieces (fruits of the Queen's liberality), and with a signal of kind recollection and enduring friendship, he departed at full gallop to overtake the Queen, the dust raised by her train being already far down the hill.

'It is not fairy money,' said honest Adam, weighing and handling the gold. 'And it was Master Roland himself, that is a certain thing. The same open hand, and by Our Lady! (shrugging his shoulders) the same ready fist! My Lady will hear of this gladly, for she mourns for him as if he were her son. And to see how gay he is! But these light lads are as sure to be uppermost as the froth to be on the top of the quart-pot. Your man of solid parts remains ever a falconer.' So saying, he went to aid his comrades, who had now come up in greater numbers, to carry his master into the Castle of Crookstone.

¹ See Battle of Langside. Note 27.

CHAPTER XXVIII

My native land, good-night !

BYRON.

MANY a bitter tear was shed during the hasty flight of Queen Mary, over fallen hopes, future prospects, and slaughtered friends. The deaths of the brave Douglas and of the fiery but gallant young Seyton seemed to affect the Queen as much as the fall from the throne, on which she had so nearly been again seated. Catherine Seyton devoured in secret her own grief, anxious to support the broken spirits of her mistress ; and the abbot, bending his troubled thoughts upon futurity, endeavoured in vain to form some plan which had a shadow of hope. The spirit of young Roland — for he also mingled in the hasty debates held by the companions of the Queen's flight — continued unchecked and unbroken.

'Your Majesty,' he said, 'has lost a battle. Your ancestor Bruce lost seven successively, ere he sat triumphant on the Scottish throne, and proclaimed with the voice of a victor, in the field of Bannockburn, the independence of his country. Are not these heaths, which we may traverse at will, better than the locked, guarded, and lake-moated Castle of Lochleven ? We are free ; in ' one word there is comfort for all our losses.'

He struck a bold note, but the heart of Mary made no response.

'Better,' she said, 'I had still been in Lochleven than seen the slaughter made by rebels among the subjects who offered themselves to death for my sake. Speak not to me of further efforts ; they would only cost the lives of you, the friends who recommend them ! I would not again undergo what I felt when I saw from yonder mount the swords of the fell horsemen of Morton raging among the faithful Seytons and Hamiltons, for their loyalty to their Queen ; I would not again feel what I felt when Douglas's life-blood stained my mantle for his love to

Mary Stewart — not to be empress of all that Britain's seas enclose. Find for me some place where I can hide my unhappy head, which brings destruction on all who love it; it is the last favour that Mary asks of her faithful followers.

In this dejected mood, but still pursuing her flight with unabated rapidity, the unfortunate Mary, after having been joined by Lord Herries and a few followers, at length halted, for the first time, at the Abbey of Dundrennan, nearly sixty miles distant from the field of battle. In this remote quarter of Galloway, the Reformation not having yet been strictly enforced against the monks, a few still lingered in their cells unmolested, and the prior, with tears and reverence, received the fugitive Queen at the gate of his convent.

'I bring you ruin, my good father,' said the Queen, as she was lifted from her palfrey.

'It is welcome,' said the prior, 'if it comes in the train of duty.'

Placed on the ground, and supported by her ladies, the Queen looked for an instant at her palfrey, which, jaded and drooping its head, seemed as if it mourned the distresses of its mistress.

'Good Roland,' said the Queen, whispering, 'let Rosabelle be cared for: ask thy heart, and it will tell thee why I make this trifling request even in this awful hour.'

She was conducted to her apartment, and in the hurried consultation of her attendants the fatal resolution of the retreat to England was finally adopted. In the morning it received her approbation, and a messenger was despatched to the English warden, to pray him for safe conduct and hospitality, on the part of the Queen of Scotland. On the next day, the Abbot Ambrose walked in the garden of the abbey with Roland, to whom he expressed his disapprobation of the course pursued. 'It is madness and ruin,' he said: 'better commit herself to the savage Highlanders or wild Bordermen than to the faith of Elizabeth. A woman to a rival woman — a presumptive successor to the keeping of a jealous and childless queen! Roland, Herries is true and loyal, but his counsel has ruined his mistress.'

'Ay, ruin follows us everywhere,' said an old man, with a spade in his hand, and dressed like a lay-brother, of whose presence, in the vehemence of his exclamation, the abbot had not been aware. 'Gaze not on with such wonder! I am he who was the Abbot Boniface at Kennaquhair, who was the gardener Blinkhoolie at Lochleven, hunted round to the place in which I served my noviciate, and now ye are come to rouse

me up again! A weary life I have had, for one to whom peace was ever the dearest blessing!

'We will soon rid you of our company, good father,' said the abbot; 'and the Queen will, I fear, trouble your retreat no more.'

'Nay, you said as much before,' said the querulous old man, 'and yet I was put forth from Kinross, and pillaged by troopers on the road. They took from me the certificate that you wot of — that of the baron; ay, he was a moss-trooper like themselves. You asked me of it, and I could never find it, but they found it; it showed the marriage of — of — my memory fails me. Now see how men differ! Father Nicolas would have told you an hundred tales of the Abbot Ingelram, on whose soul God have mercy! He was, I warrant you, fourscore and six, and I am not more than — let me see —'

'Was not "Avenel" the name you seek, my good father?' said Roland, impatiently, yet moderating his tone for fear of alarming or offending the infirm old man.

'Ay, right — Avenel — Julian Avenel. You are perfect in the name. I kept all the special confessions, judging it held with my vow to do so. I could not find it when my successor, Ambrosius, spoke on't; but the troopers found it, and the knight who commanded the party struck his breast till the target clattered like an empty watering-can.'

'St. Mary!' said the abbot, 'in whom could such a paper excite such interest? What was the appearance of the knight, his arms, his colours?'

'Ye distract me with your questions. I dared hardly look at him; they charged me with bearing letters for the Queen, and searched my mail. This was all along of your doings at Lochleven.'

'I trust in God,' said the abbot to Roland, who stood beside him, shivering and trembling with impatience, 'the paper has fallen into the hands of my brother. I heard he had been with his followers on the scout betwixt Stirling and Glasgow. Perce not the knight a holly-bough in his helmet? Must thou not remember?'

'Oh, remember — remember,' said the old man, pettishly; 'count as many years as I do, if your plots will let you, and see what, and how much, you remember. Why, I scarce remember the pearmain which I grafted here with my own hands some fifty years since.'

At this moment a bugle sounded loudly from the beach.

'It is the death-blast to Queen Mary's royalty!' said

Ambrosius : 'the English warden's answer has been received — favourable, doubtless, for when was the door of the trap closed against the prey which it was set for? Droop not, Roland, this matter shall be sifted to the bottom; but we must not now leave the Queen. Follow me; let us do our duty, and trust the issue with God. Farewell, good father; I will visit thee again soon.'

He was about to leave the garden, followed by Roland, with half-reluctant steps. The ex-abbot resumed his spade.

'I could be sorry for these men,' he said, 'ay, and for that poor queen, but what avail earthly sorrows to a man of fourscore? and it is a rare dropping morning for the early colewort.'

'He is stricken with age,' said Ambrosius, as he dragged Roland down to the sea-beach; 'we must let him take his time to collect himself. Nothing now can be thought on but the fate of the Queen.'

They soon arrived where she stood, surrounded by her little train, and by her side the sheriff of Cumberland, a gentleman of the house of Lowther, richly dressed, and accompanied by soldiers. The aspect of the Queen exhibited a singular mixture of alacrity and reluctance to depart. Her language and gestures spoke hope and consolation to her attendants, and she seemed desirous to persuade even herself that the step she adopted was secure, and that the assurance she had received of kind reception was altogether satisfactory; but her quivering lip and unsettled eye betrayed at once her anguish at departing from Scotland and her fears of confiding herself to the doubtful faith of England.

'Welcome, my lord abbot,' she said, speaking to Ambrosius, 'and you, Roland Avenel, we have joyful news for you: our loving sister's officer proffers us, in her name, a safe asylum from the rebels who have driven us from our home; only it grieves me we must here part from you for a short space.'

'Part from us madam!' said the abbot. 'Is your welcome in England, then, to commence with the abridgment of your train and dismissal of your counsellors?'

'Take it not thus, good father,' said Mary; 'the warden and the sheriff, faithful servants of our royal sister, deem it necessary to obey her instructions in the present case, even to the letter, and can only take upon them to admit me with my female attendants. An express will instantly be despatched from London, assigning me a place of residence; and I will speedily send to all of you whenever my court shall be formed.'

'Your court formed in England! and while Elizabeth lives and reigns?' said the abbot; 'that will be when we shall see two suns in one heaven!'

'Do not think so,' replied the Queen; 'we are well assured of our sister's good faith. Elizabeth loves fame; and not all that she has won by her power and her wisdom will equal that which she will acquire by extending her hospitality to a distressed sister; not all that she may hereafter do of good, wise, and great, would blot out the reproach of abusing our confidence. Farewell, my page — now my knight — farewell for a brief season. I will dry the tears of Catherine, or I will weep with her till neither of us can weep longer.' She held out her hand to Roland, who, flinging himself on his knees, kissed it with much emotion. He was about to render the same homage to Catherine, when the Queen, assuming an air of sprightliness, said, 'Her lips, thou foolish boy! and, Catherine, coy it not; these English gentlemen should see that, even in our cold clime, beauty knows how to reward bravery and fidelity!'

'We are not now to learn the force of Scottish beauty, or the mettle of Scottish valour,' said the sheriff of Cumberland, courteously. 'I would it were in my power to bid these attendants upon her who is herself the mistress of Scottish beauty as welcome to England as my poor cares would make them. But our Queen's orders are positive in case of such an emergency, and they must not be disputed by her subject. May I remind your Majesty that the tide ebbs fast?'

The sheriff took the Queen's hand, and she had already placed her foot on the gangway by which she was to enter the skiff, when the abbot, starting from a trance of grief and astonishment at the words of the sheriff, rushed into the water, and seized upon her mantle.

'She foresaw it! — she foresaw it!' he exclaimed — 'she foresaw your flight into her realm; and, foreseeing it, gave orders you should be thus received. Blinded, deceived, doomed princess! your fate is sealed when you quit this strand. Queen of Scotland, thou shalt not leave thine heritage!' he continued, holding a still firmer grasp upon her mantle; 'true men shall turn rebels to thy will, that they may save thee from captivity or death. Fear not the bills and bows whom that gay man has at his beck: we will withstand him by force. Oh, for the arm of my warlike brother! Roland Avenel, draw thy sword!'

The Queen stood irresolute and frightened — one foot upon

the plank, the other on the sand of her native shore, which she was quitting for ever.

'What needs this violence, sir priest?' said the sheriff of Cumberland. 'I came hither at your Queen's command, to do her service; and I will depart at her least order, if she rejects such aid as I can offer. No marvel is it if our Queen's wisdom foresaw that such chance as this might happen amidst the turmoils of your unsettled state; and, while willing to afford fair hospitality to her royal sister, deemed it wise to prohibit the entrance of a broken army of her followers into the English frontier.'

'You hear,' said Queen Mary, gently unloosing her robe from the abbot's grasp, 'that we exercise full liberty of choice in leaving this shore; and, questionless, the choice will remain free to us in going to France, or returning to our own dominions, as we shall determine. Besides, it is too late. Your blessing, father, and God speed thee!'

'May He have mercy on thee, Princess, and speed thee also!' said the abbot, retreating. 'But my soul tells me I look on thee for the last time!'

The sails were hoisted, the oars were plied, the vessel went freshly on her way through the firth, which divides the shores of Cumberland from those of Galloway; but not till the vessel diminished to the size of a child's frigate did the doubtful, and dejected, and dismissed followers of the Queen cease to linger on the sands; and long, long could they discern the kerchief of Mary, as she waved the oft-repeated signal of adieu to her faithful adherents and to the shores of Scotland.

If good tidings of a private nature could have consoled Roland for parting with his mistress, and for the distresses of his sovereign, he received such comfort some days subsequent to the Queen's leaving Dundrennan. A breathless post — no other than Adam Woodcock — brought despatches from Sir Halbert Glendinning to the abbot, whom he found with Roland, still residing at Dundrennan, and in vain torturing Boniface with fresh interrogations. The packet bore an earnest invitation to his brother to make Avenel Castle for a time his residence. 'The clemency of the Regent,' said the writer, 'has extended pardon both to Roland and to you, upon condition of your remaining a time under my wardship. And I have that

to communicate respecting the parentage of Roland which not only you will willingly listen to, but which will be also found to afford me, as the husband of his nearest relative, some interest in the future course of his life.'

The abbot read this letter, and paused, as if considering what were best for him to do. Meanwhile, Woodcock took Roland aside, and addressed him as follows: 'Now look, Master Roland, that you do not let any Papistrie nonsense lure either the priest or you from the right quarry. See you, you ever bore yourself as a bit of a gentleman. Read that, and thank God that threw old Abbot Boniface in our way, as two of the Seyton's men were conveying him towards Dundrennan here. We searched him for intelligence concerning that fair exploit of yours at Lochleven, that has cost many a man his life, and me a set of sore bones, and we found what is better for your purpose than ours.'

The paper which he gave was, indeed, an attestation by Father Philip, subscribing himself unworthy sacristan and brother of the house of St. Mary's, stating, 'That under a vow of secrecy he had united, in the holy sacrament of marriage, Julian Avenel and Catherine Grame; but that Julian having repented of his union, he, Father Philip, had been sinfully prevailed on by him to conceal and disguise the same, according to a complot devised betwixt him and the said Julian Avenel, whereby the poor damsel was induced to believe that the ceremony had been performed by one not in holy orders, and having no authority to that effect; which sinful concealment the undersigned conceived to be the cause why he was abandoned to the misguiding of a water fiend, whereby he had been under a spell, which obliged him to answer every question, even touching the most solemn matters, with idle snatches of old songs, besides being sorely afflicted with rheumatic pains ever after. Wherefore he had deposited this testificate and confession, with the day and date of the said marriage, with his lawful superior, Beniface, abbot of St. Mary's, *sub sigillo confessionis*.'

It appeared by a letter from Julian, folded carefully up with the certificate, that the Abbot Boniface had, in effect, bestirred himself in the affair, and obtained from the baron a promise to avow his marriage; but the death of both Julian and his injured bride, together with the abbot's resignation, his ignorance of the fate of their unhappy offspring, and, above all, the good father's listless and inactive disposition, had suffered the matter to become totally forgotten, until it was recalled by some acci-

dental conversation with the Abbot Ambrosius concerning the fortunes of the Avenel family. At the request of his successor, the quondam abbot made search for it ; but, as he would receive no assistance in looking among the few records of spiritual experiences and important confessions which he had conscientiously treasured, it might have remained for ever hidden amongst them but for the more active researches of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

'So that you are like to be heir of Avenel at last, Master Roland, after my lord and lady have gone to their place,' said Adam ; 'and as I have but one boon to ask, I trust you will not nick me with nay.'

'Not if it be in my power to say "yes," my trusty friend.'

'Why then, I must needs, if I live to see that day, keep on feeding the eyases with unwashed flesh,' said Woodcock, sturdily, yet as if doubting the reception that his request might meet with.

'Thou shalt feed them with what you list for me,' said Roland, laughing ; 'I am not many months older than when I left the castle, but I trust I have gathered wit enough to cross no man of skill in his own vocation.'

'Then I would not change places with the King's falconer,' said Adam Woodcock, 'nor with the Queen's neither ; but they say she will be mewed up, and never need one. I see it grieves you to think of it, and I could grieve for company ; but what help for it ? Fortune will fly her own flight, let a man halloo himself hoarse.'

The abbot and Roland journeyed to Avenel, where the former was tenderly received by his brother, while the lady wept for joy to find that in her favourite orphan she had protected the sole surviving branch of her own family. Sir Halbert Glendinning and his household were not a little surprised at the change which a brief acquaintance with the world had produced in their former inmate, and rejoiced to find in the pettish, spoiled, and presuming page a modest and unassuming young man, too much acquainted with his own expectations and character to be hot or petulant in demanding the consideration which was readily and voluntarily yielded to him. The old major-domo Wingate was the first to sing his praises, to which Mistress Liliast bore a loud echo, always hoping that God would teach him the true Gospel.

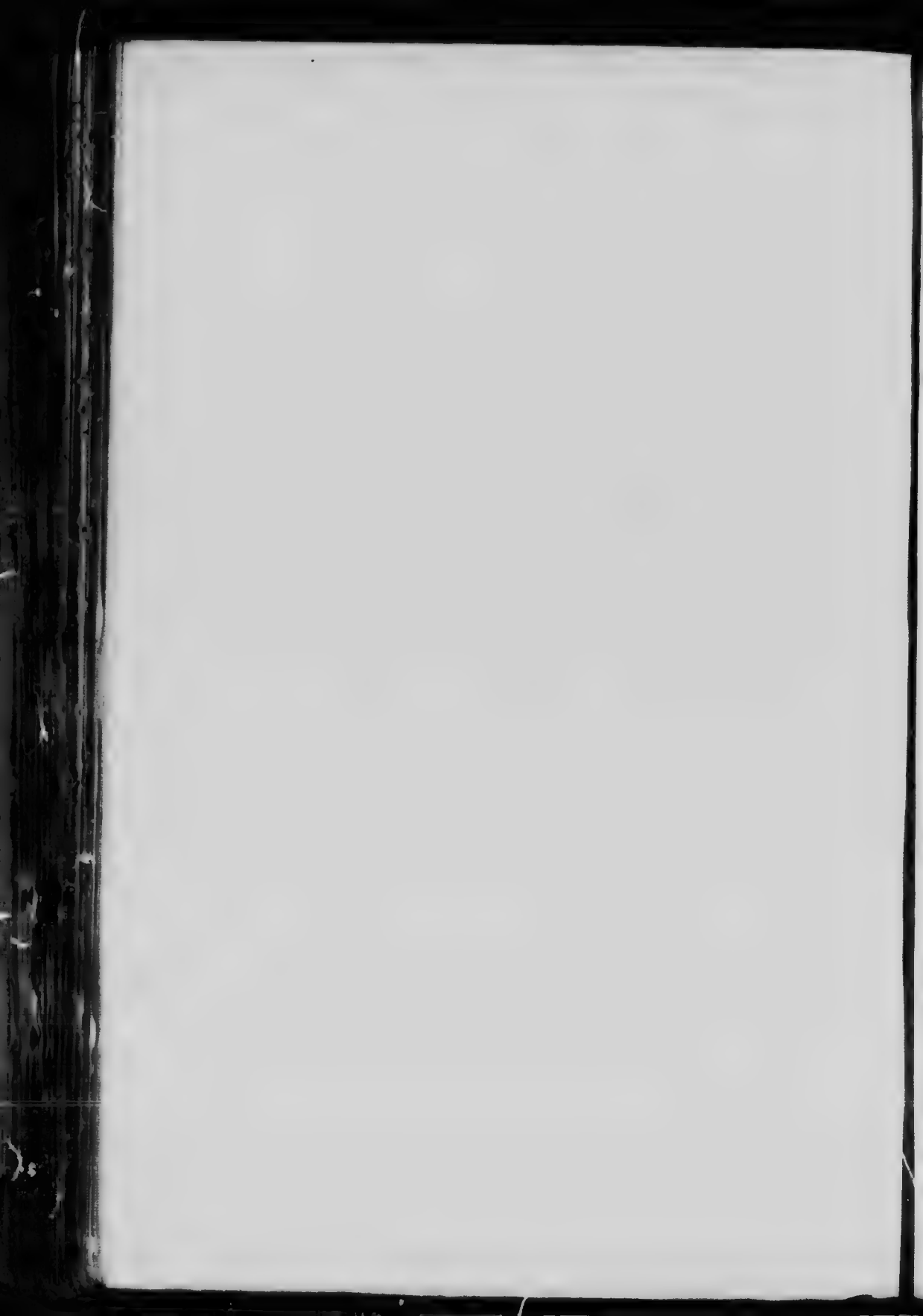
To the true Gospel the heart of Roland had secretly long inclined, and the departure of the good abbot for France, with

the purpose of entering into some house of his order in that kingdom, removed his chief objection to renouncing the Catholic faith. Another might have existed in the duty which he owed to Magdalen Græme, both by birth and from gratitude. But he learned, ere he had been long a resident in Avenel, that his grandmother had died at Cologne, in the performance of a penance too severe for her age, which she had taken upon herself in behalf of the Queen and Church of Scotland, so soon as she heard of the defeat at Langside. The zeal of the Abbot Ambrosius was more regulated; but he retired into the Scottish convent of —, and so lived there that the fraternity were inclined to claim for him the honours of canonisation. But he guessed their purpose, and prayed them on his death-bed to do no honours to the body of one as sinful as themselves; but to send his body and his heart to be buried in Avenel burial-aisle, in the Monasterie of St. Mary's, that the last abbot of that celebrated house of devotion might sleep among its ruins.¹

Long before that period arrived, Roland Avenel was wedded to Catherine Seyton, who, after two years' residence with her unhappy mistress, was dismissed, upon her being subjected to closer restraint than had been at first exercised. She returned to her father's house, and as Roland was acknowledged for the successor and lawful heir of the ancient house of Avenel, greatly increased as the estate was by the providence of Sir Halbert Glendinning, there occurred no objections to the match on the part of her family. Her mother was recently dead when she first entered the convent; and her father, in the unsettled times which followed Queen Mary's flight to England, was not averse to an alliance with a youth who, himself loyal to Queen Mary, still held some influence, through means of Sir Halbert Glendinning, with the party in power.

Roland and Catherine, therefore, were united, spite of their differing faiths; and the White Lady, whose apparition had been infrequent when the house of Avenel seemed verging to extinction, was seen to sport by her haunted well, with a zone of gold around her bosom as broad as the baldrick of an earl.

¹ See Burial of the Abbot's Heart in the Avenel Aisle. Note 28.



NOTES TO THE ABBOT

NOTE 1. — GLENDONWYNE OF GLENDONWYNE, p. 26

THIS was a house of ancient descent and superior consequence, including persons who fought at Bannockburn and Otterburn, and closely connected by alliance and friendship with the great Earls of Douglas. The knight in the story argues as most Scotsmen would do in his situation, for all of the same clan are popularly considered as descended from the same stock, and as having a right to the ancestral honour of the chief branch. This opinion, though sometimes ideal, is so strong, even at this day of innovation, that it may be observed as a national difference between my countrymen and the English. If you ask an Englishman of good birth whether a person of the same name be connected with him, he answers, *if in dubio*, 'No, he is a mere namesake.' Ask a similar question of a Scot — I mean a Scotsman — he replies, 'He is one of our clan; I daresay there is a relationship, though I do not know how distant.' The Englishman thinks of discountenancing a species of rivalry in society; the Scotsman's answer is grounded on the ancient idea of strengthening the clan.

NOTE 2. — BAG FOR HAWKS' MEAT, p. 65

This same bag, like everything belonging to falconry, was esteemed an honourable distinction, and worn often by the nobility and gentry. One of the Sommervilles of Camnethan was called Sir John with the Red Bag, because it was his wont to wear his hawking-pouch covered with satin of that colour.

NOTE 3. — CELL OF ST. CUTHBERT, p. 69

I may here observe, that this is entirely an ideal scene. St. Cuthbert, a person of established sanctity, had, no doubt, several places of worship on the Borders, where he flourished whilst living; but Tillmouth Chapel is the only one which bears some resemblance to the hermitage described in the text. It has, indeed, a well, famous for gratifying three wishes for every worshipper who shall quaff the fountain with sufficient belief in its efficacy. At this spot the saint is said to have landed in his stone coffin, in which he sailed down the Tweed from Melrose, and here the stone coffin long lay, in evidence of the fact. The late Sir Francis Blake Delaval is said to have taken the exact measure of the coffin, and to have ascertained, by hydrostatic principles, that it might have actually swum. A profane farmer in the neighbourhood announced his intention of converting this last bed of the saint into a trough for his swine; but the profanation was rendered impossible, either by the saint or by some pious votary in his behalf, for on the following morning the stone sarcophagus was found broken in two fragments.

Tillmouth Chapel, with these points of resemblance, lies, however, in

exactly the opposite direction as regards Melrose which the supposed cell of St. Cuthbert is said to have borne towards Kennaquhair.

NOTE 4. — GOSS-HAWK, p. 82

The comparison is taken from some beautiful verses in an old ballad, entitled 'Fause Foodrage,' published in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. A deposed queen, to preserve her infant son from the traitors who have slain his father, exchanges him with the female offspring of a faithful friend, and goes on to direct the education of the children, and the private signals by which the parents are to hear news each of her own offspring.

And you shall learn my gay goss-hawk
Right well to breast a steed;
And so will I your turtle dow,
As well to write and read.

And you shall learn my gay goss-hawk
To wick both bow and brand;
And so will I your turtle dow,
To lay gowd with her hand.

At kirk or market when we meet,
We'll dare make no avow,
But, 'Dame, how does my gay goss-hawk?'
'Madame, how does my dow?'

NOTE 5. — NUNNERY OF ST. BRIDGET, p. 104

This, like the cell of St. Cuthbert, is an imaginary scene; but I took one or two ideas of the desolation of the interior from a story told me by my father. In his youth — it may be near eighty years since, as he was born in 1720 — he had occasion to visit an old lady who resided in a Border castle of considerable renown. Only one very limited portion of the extensive ruins sufficed for the accommodation of the inmates, and my father amused himself by wandering through the part that was untenanted. In a dining apartment, having a roof richly adorned with arches and drops, there was deposited a large stack of hay, to which calves were helping themselves from opposite sides. As my father was scaling a dark, ruinous turnpike staircase, his greyhound ran up before him, and probably was the means of saving his life, for the animal fell through a trap-door, or aperture in the stair, thus warning the owner of the danger of the ascent. As the dog continued howling from a great depth, my father got the old butler, who alone knew most of the localities about the castle, to unlock a sort of stable, in which Killbuck was found safe and sound, the place being filled with the same commodity which littered the stalls of Augeas, and which had rendered the dog's fall an easy one.

NOTE 6. — NUN OF KENT, p. 109

A fanatic nun, called the Holy Maid of Kent, who pretended to the gift of prophecy and power of miracles. Having denounced the doom of speedy death against Henry VIII. for his marriage with Anne Boleyn, the prophetess was attainted in Parliament, and executed, with her accomplices. Her imposture was for a time so successful that even Sir Thomas More was disposed to be a believer.

NOTE 7. — HUNTING MASS, p. 117

In Catholic countries, in order to reconcile the pleasures of the great with the observances of religion, it was common, when a party was bent

for the chase, to celebrate mass, abridged and maimed of its rites, called a hunting mass, the brevity of which was designed to correspond with the impatience of the audience.

NOTE 8. — ABBOT OF UNREASON, p. 119

We learn, from no less authority than that of Napoleon Bonaparte, that there is but a single step between the sublime and ridiculous; and it is a transition from one extreme to another so very easy that the vulgar of every degree are peculiarly captivated with it. Thus the inclination to laugh becomes uncontrollable when the solemnity and gravity of time, place, and circumstances render it peculiarly improper. Some species of general license, like that which inspired the ancient Saturnalia, or the modern Carnival, has been commonly indulged to the people at all times, and in almost all countries. But it was, I think, peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church that, while they studied how to render their church rites imposing and magnificent, by all that pomp, music, architecture, and external display could add to them, they nevertheless connived, upon special occasions, at the frolics of the rude vulgar, who, in almost all Catholic countries, enjoyed, or at least assumed, the privilege of making some lord of the revels, who, under the name of the Abbot of Unreason, the Boy Bishop, or the President of Fools, occupied the churches, profaned the holy places by a mock imitation of the sacred rites, and sung indecent parodies on hymns of the church. The indifference of the clergy, even when their power was greatest, to the indecent exhibitions, which they always tolerated, and sometimes encouraged, forms a strong contrast to the sensitiveness with which they regarded any serious attempt, by preaching or writing, to impeach any of the doctrines of the church. It could only be compared to the singular apathy with which they endured, and often admired, the gross novels which Chaucer, Dunbar, Boccaccio, Bandello, and others composed upon the bad morals of the clergy. It seems as if the churchmen in both instances had endeavoured to compromise with the laity, and allowed them occasionally to gratify their coarse humour by indecent satire, provided they would abstain from any grave question concerning the foundation of the doctrines on which was erected such an immense fabric of ecclesiastical power.

But the sports thus licensed assumed a very different appearance so soon as the Protestant doctrines began to prevail: and the license which their forefathers had exercised in mere gaiety of heart, and without the least intention of dishonouring religion by their frolics, was now persevered in by the common people as a mode of testifying their utter disregard for the Roman priesthood and its ceremonies.

I may observe, for example, the case of an apparitor sent to Borthwick from the Primate of St. Andrews, to cite the lord of that castle, who was opposed by an Abbot of Unreason, at whose command the officer of the spiritual court was appointed to be ducked in a mill-dam, and obliged to eat up his parchment citation.

The reader may be amused with the following whimsical details of this incident, which took place in the castle of Borthwick, in the year 1547. It appears that, in consequence of a process betwixt Master George Hay de Minzeane and the Lord Borthwick, letters of excommunication had passed against the latter, on account of the contumacy of certain witnesses. William Langlands, an apparitor or mace (*bacularius*) of the see of St. Andrews, presented these letters to the curate of the church of Borthwick, requiring him to publish the same at the service of high mass. It seems that the inhabitants of the castle were at this time engaged in the favourite sport of enacting the Abbot of Unreason, a species of high jinks, in which a mimic prelate was elected, who, like the Lord of Misrule in England, turned all sort of lawful authority, and particularly the church ritual, into ridicule. This frolicsome person, with his retinue, notwithstanding of the apparitor's

character, entered the church, seized upon the Primate's officer without hesitation, and, dragging him to the mill-dam on the south side of the castle, compelled him to leap into the water. Not contented with this partial immersion, the Abbot of Unreason pronounced that Mr. William Langlands was not yet sufficiently bathed, and therefore caused his assistants to lay him on his back in the stream, and duck him in the most satisfactory and perfect manner. The unfortunate apparitor was then conducted back to the church, where, for his refreshment after his bath, the letters of excommunication were torn to pieces, and steeped in a bowl of wine; the mock abbot being probably of opinion that a tough parchment was but dry eating. Langlands was compelled to eat the letters and swallow the wine, and dismissed by the Abbot of Unreason, with the comfortable assurance that, if any more such letters should arrive during the continuance of his office, 'they should a' gang the same gate,' i. e. go the same road.

A similar scene occurs betwixt a sumner of the Bishop of Rochester and Harpool, the servant of Lord Cobham, in the old play of *Sir John Oldcastle*, when the former compels the church-officer to eat his citation. The dialogue which may be found in the note contains most of the jests which may be supposed appropriate to such an extraordinary occasion:

Harpool. Marry, sir, is this process parchment?

Sumner. Yes, marry is it.

Harpool. And this seal wax?

Sumner. It is so.

Harpool. If this be parchment, and this be wax, eat you this parchment and wax, or I will make parchment of your skin, and beat your brains into wax. Sirrah Sumner, despatch—devour, sirrah, devour.

Sumner. I am my Lord of Rochester's sumner; I came to do my office, and thou shalt answer it.

Harpool. Sirrah, no railing, but betake thyself to thy teeth. Thou shalt eat no worse than thou bringest with thee. Thou bringest it for my lord; and wilt thou bring my lord worse than thou wilt eat thyself?

Sumner. Sir, I brought it not my lord to eat.

Harpool. O, do you sir me now? All's one for that; I'll make you eat it for bringing it.

Sumner. I cannot eat it.

Harpool. Can you not? 'Shlood, I'll heat you till you have a stomach? [*Bells Adm.*]

Sumner. Oh, hold, hold, good Mr. Serving-man; I will eat it.

Harpool. Be champing, be chewing, sir, or I will chew you, you rogue. Tough wax is the purest of the honey.

Sumner. The purest of the honey! O Lord, sir! oh! oh!

Harpool. Feed, feed; 'tis wholesome, rogue—wholesome. Cannot you, like an honest sumner, walk with the devil your brother, to fetch in your balliff's rents, but you must come to a nobleman's house with process? If the seal were broad as the lead which covers Rochester Church, thou shouldst eat it.

Sumner. Oh, I am almost choked—I am almost choked!

Harpool. Who's within there? will you shame my lord? Is there no beer in the house? Butler, I say.

Enter BUTLER.

Butler. Here—here.

Harpool. Give him beer. Tough old sheep-skin's but dry meat.

First Part of Sir John Oldcastle, Act II. Scene I

NOTE 9. — THE HOBBY-HORSE, p. 120

This exhibition, the play-mare of Scotland, stood high among holyday gambols. It must be carefully separated from the wooden chargers which furnish out our nurseries. It gives rise to Hamlet's ejaculation—

But oh, but oh, the hobby-horse is forgot!

There is a very comic scene in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of *Women Pleased*, where Hope-on-high Bonbye, a Puritan cobbler, refuses to dance

with the hobby-horse. There was much difficulty and great variety in the motions which the hobby-horse was expected to exhibit.

The learned Mr. Douce, who has contributed so much to the illustration of our theatrical antiquities, has given us a full account of this pageant, and the burlesque horsemanship which it practised.

'The hobby-horse,' says Mr. Douce, 'was represented by a man equipped with as much pasteboard as was sufficient to form the head and hinder parts of a horse, the quadrupedal defects being concealed by a long mantle or foot-cloth that nearly touched the ground. The former, on this occasion, exerted all his skill in burlesque horsemanship. In Sampson's play of the *Vow-breaker*, 1636, a miller personates the hobby-horse, and being angry that the mayor of the city is put in competition with him, exclaims, "Let the mayor play the hobby-horse among his brethren, as he will; I hope our town-lads cannot want a hobby-horse. Have I practised my reins, my careers, my prankers, my ambles, my false trots, my smooth ambles, and Canterbury paces, and shall master mayor put me beside the hobby-horse? Have I borrowed the forehorse bells, his plumes, his braveries; nay, had his mane new shorn and frizzled, and shall the mayor put me beside the hobby-horse?"' — Douce's *Illustrations*, vol. II. p. 468.

NOTE 10. — REPRESENTATION OF ROBIN HOOD AND LITTLE JOHN, p. 121

The representation of Robin Hood was the darling May-game both in England and Scotland, and doubtless the favourite personification was often revived, when the Abbot of Unreason, or other pretences of frolic, gave an unusual degree of licence.

The Protestant clergy, who had formerly reaped advantage from the opportunities which these sports afforded them of directing their own satire and the ridicule of the lower orders against the Catholic Church, began to find that, when these purposes were served, their favourite pastimes deprived them of the wish to attend divine worship, and disturbed the frame of mind in which it can be attended to advantage. The celebrated Bishop Latimer gives a very naïve account of the manner in which, bishop as he was, he found himself compelled to give place to Robin Hood and his followers.

'I came once myself riding on a journey homeward from London, and I sent word over night, into the towne that I would preach there in the morning, because it was hollyday, and methought it was a holydayes worke. The church stood in my way, and I took my horse and my company, and went thither (I thought I should have found a great company in the church), and when I came there the church doore was fast locked. I tarried there halfe an houre and more. At last the key was found, and one of the parish comes to me, and said, "Sir, this is a busie day with us, we cannot bear you; it is Robin Hood's day. The parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood. I pray you let them not." I was faine there to give place to Robin Hood. I thought my rochet should have been regarded, though I were not; but it would not serve, it was faine to give place to Robin Hood's men. It is no laughing matter, my friends: it is a weeping matter, a heave matter — a heave matter. Under the pretence for gathering for Robin Hood, a traytour and a thief, to put out a preacher, to have his office lesse esteemed, to preferre Robin Hood before the ministration of God's Word; and all this hath come of unpreaching prelates. This realme hath been ill provided for, that it hath had such corrupt judgments in it, to prefer Robin Hood to God's Word.' — *Bishop Latimer's Sixth Sermon before King Edward*.

While the English Protestants thus preferred the outlaw's pageant to the preaching of their excellent bishop, the Scottish Calvinistic clergy, with the celebrated John Knox at their head, and backed by the authority of the magistrates of Edinburgh, who had of late been chosen exclusively from this party, found it impossible to control the rage of the populace,

when they attempted to deprive them of the privilege of presenting their peasant of Robin Hood.

(1561). 'Vpon the xxi day of Junij, Archibalde Dowglas of Kilsapindie, Provost of Ed^o. David Hymmer and Adame Fullartoun, baillies of the samyne, causit ane cordinare servant, callit James Gillion, takin of befoir, for playing in Ed^o with Robene Hude, to wnderly the law, and put him to the knowlege of ane assyise, qik yaij hald electit of yair favoraris, quha with schort deliberatioun condemnit him to be hangit for ye said cryme. And the deacons of ye craftisman, fearing vproare, maid grent sollicitatis at ye handis of ye said provost and baillies, and als requirit John Knox, minister, for eschewing of tumult, to supercoid ye executioun of him, vnto ye tyme yai suld advertise my Lord Duke yairof. And yan, if it wes his mynd and will yat he should be disposit vpon, ye said deacons and craftisman could convey him yaire; quha answerit, yat yai culd na way stope ye executioun of justice. Quhan ye tyme of the said pover mans hanging approcht, and yat ye hangman wes cum to ye flibbat with ye ledder, vpounne ye qik ye said cordinare should have bene hangit, ane certaine and remanent craftschilder, quha wes put to ye horne with ye said Gillione, for ye said Robene Hude's playes, and vyris yair assistaris and favoraris, past to wap-pinis, and yai brak down ye said flibbat, and yan chaict ye said provost, baillies, and Alexr. Guthrie, in ye said Alexander's writting-bulth, and held yame yairin; and yairefter past to ye tolbuyt, and becaus the samyne was steiket, and onnawayes culd get the keyes thairof, thai brake the said tolbuilt dore with sure harberis perforce (the said provost and baillies luckand thairon), and not onlie put thar the said Gillione to fredome and libertie, and brocht him furth of the said tolbuilt, bot alsua the remanent presonaris being thairin till. And this done, the said craftismen's servanda, with the said condemnit cordonar, past down to the Netherbow, to have past furth thairat; bot becaus the samyne on thair coming thairto wes closet, thai past vp agane the Hie Streit of the said bourghe to the Castell hill, and in this menetyne the saidis provost and baillier and thair assistaris being in the writting-bulth of the said Alexr. Guthrie, past and enterit in the said tolbuyt, and in the said servandas passage vp the Hie Streit, then schote furth thairof at thame ane dog, and hurt ane servand of the said childer. This being done, thair wes nathing thair but the one partie schuteand out and castand stanes furth of the said tolbuyt, and the vther pairtie schuteand hagbuttis in the same agane. And sua the craftismen's servandis, above written, held and inclost the said provost and baillies continewalle in the said tolbuyth, frae three hours efternone quhill aught hours at even, and na man of the said town prensit to relieve thair said provost and baillies. And than thai send to the maisters of the Castell, to caus thaim if thai mycht stay the said servandis, quha maid ane maner to do the same, bot that could not bring the same to ane finall end, for the said servandis wold on nowayes stay frae, quhill thai had revengit the hurting of ane of them; and thairefter the constable of the Castell come down thairfra, and he with the said maisters treatet betwix the said pties in this maner:—That the said provost and baillies sall remit to the said craftschilder all actioun, cryme, and offensa that thai had committit aganes thame in any tyme hygane; and band and oblast thame nevir to pursew them thairfor; and als commandit thair maisters to resaue them agane in thair services, as thai did befoir. And this being proclamit at the mercat cross, thai scallit, and the said provost and baillies come furth of the same tolbuyth,' etc. etc. etc.

John Knox, who writes at large upon this tumult, informs us it was inflamed by the deacons of crafts, who, resenting the superiority assumed over them by the magistrates, would yield no assistance to put down the tumult. 'They will be magistrates alone,' said the recusant deacons, 'e'en let them rule the populace alone'; and accordingly they passed quietly to take their 'four hours penny,' and left the magistrates to help themselves as they could. Many persons were excommunicated for this outrage, and not admitted to church ordinances till they had made satisfaction.

NOTE 11. — 'THE PAIP, THAT PAGAN,' p. 132

These rude rhymes are taken, with some trifling alterations, from a ballad called 'Trim-gotrix.' It occurs in a singular collection, entitled *A Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Songs, Collected out of sundrie Parts of the Scripture, with Hundry of other Ballates Changed out of Prophane Songs, for Avoiding of Sin and Hurletrie, with Augmentation of Sundrie Odes and Godly Ballates*. Edinburgh, printed by Andro Hart. This curious collection has been reprinted in Mr. John Grahame Dalzell's *Scottish Poems of the 16th Century*. Edin. 1801, 2 vols.

NOTE 12. — INABILITY OF EVIL SPIRITS TO ENTER A HOUSE UNINVITED, p. 143

There is a popular belief respecting evil spirits, that they cannot enter an inhabited house unless invited, nay, dragged over the threshold. There is an instance of the same superstition in the *Tales of the Genii*, where an enchanter is supposed to have intruded himself into the divan of the sultan.

"Thus," said the illustrious Misnar, "let the enemies of Mahomet be dismayed! but inform me, O ye sages! under the semblance of which of your brethren did that foul enchanter gain admittance here?" "May the lord of my heart," answered Balihu, the hermit of the faithful from Queda, "triumph over all his foes! As I travelled on the mountains from Queda, and saw neither the footsteps of beasts, nor the flight of birds, behold, I chanced to pass through a cavern, in whose hollow sides I found this accursed sage, to whom I unfolded the invitation of the Sultan of India, and we, joining, journeyed towards the divan; but ere we entered, he said unto me, 'Put thy hand forth, and pull me towards thee into the divan, calling on the name of Mahomet, for the evil spirits are on me, and vex me.'"

I have understood that many parts of these fine tales, and in particular that of the Sultan Misnar, were taken from genuine Oriental sources by the editor, Mr. James Ridley.

But the most picturesque use of this popular belief occurs in Coleridge's beautiful and tantalising fragment of *Christabel*. Has not our own imaginative poet cause to fear that future ages will desire to summon him from his place of rest, as Milton longed

To call him up, who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold?

The verses I refer to are when Christabel conducts into her father's castle a mysterious and malevolent being, under the guise of a distressed female stranger.

They cross'd the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she open'd straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was iron'd within and without,
Where an army in battle array had march'd out.

The lady sank, helike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They cross'd the court: right glad they were,
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side:

'Praise we the Virgin, all divine,
Who hath rescued thee from this distress.'
'Alas, alas!' said Geraldine,
'I cannot speak from weariness.'
So free from danger, free from fear,
They cross'd the court: — right glad they were.

NOTE 13. — SETON, OR SETON, p. 165

George, fifth Lord Seton, was immovably faithful to Queen Mary during all the mutabilities of her fortune. He was grand master of the household, in which capacity he had a picture painted of himself with his official baton, and the following motto: —

In adversitate patiens;
In prosperitate benevolus.
Hasard, yet forward.

On various parts of his castle he inscribed, as expressing his religious and political creed, the legend,

UN DUC, UN FOY, UN ROY, UN LOY.

He declined to be promoted to an earldom, which Queen Mary offered him at the same time when she advanced her natural brother to be Earl of Mar, and afterwards of Murray.

On his refusing this honour, Mary wrote, or caused to be written, the following lines in Latin and French: —

Sunt comites, ducesque alii, sunt denique reges;
Sethoni dominum ait satis esse mihi.

Il y a des comtes, des roys, des ducs; ainsi
O'est assez pour moy d'estre Seigneur de Seton.

Which may be thus rendered: —

Earl, duke, or king, be thou that list to be;
Seton, thy lordship is enough for me.

This distich reminds us of the 'pride which aped humility' in the motto of the house of Couci:

Je suis ni roy, ni prince auec;
Je suis le Seigneur de Coucy.

After the battle of Langside, Lord Seton was obliged to retire abroad for safety, and was an exile for two years, during which he was reduced to the necessity of driving a waggon in Flanders for his subsistence. He rose to favour in James VI.'s reign, and resuming his paternal property, had himself painted in his waggoner's dress, and in the act of driving a wain with four horses, on the north end of a stately gallery at Seton Castle. He appears to have been fond of the arts; for there exists a beautiful family-piece of him in the centre of his family. Mr. Pinkerton, in his *Scottish Iconographia*, published an engraving of this curious portrait. The original is the property of Lord Somerville, nearly connected with the Seton family, and is at present at his lordship's fishing-villa of the Pavilion, near Melrose.

NOTE 14. — FANFARONA, p. 166

A name given to the gold chains worn by the military men of the period. It is of Spanish origin; for the fashion of wearing these costly ornaments was much followed amongst the conquerors of the New World.

NOTE 15. — MAIDEN OF MORTON, p. 172

A species of guillotine which the Regent Morton brought down from Halifax, certainly at a period considerably later than intimated in the tale. He was himself the first who suffered by the engine. —

This instrument, which is preserved in the Antiquarian Museum of Edinburgh, was brought to Scotland several years earlier than popular tradition assigns, and is said to have been used for the execution of criminals about twenty years before the Earl of Morton was beheaded, in 1582 (*Laing*).

NOTE 16. — THE RESIGNATION OF QUEEN MARY, p. 240

The details of this remarkable event are, as given in chapter xxii., imaginary; but the outline of the events is historical. Sir Robert Lindesay, brother to the author of the *Memoirs*, was at first entrusted with the delicate commission of persuading the imprisoned Queen to resign her crown. As he flatly refused to interfere, they determined to send the Lord Lindesay, one of the rudest and most violent of their own faction, with instructions, first to use fair persuasions, and if these did not succeed, to enter into harder terms. Knox associates Lord Ruthven with Lindesay in this alarming commission. He was the son of that Lord Ruthven who was prime agent in the murder of Rizzio; and little mercy was to be expected from his conjunction with Lindesay.

The employment of such rude tools argued a resolution on the part of those who had the Queen's person in their power to proceed to the utmost extremities, should they find Mary obstinate. To avoid this pressing danger, Sir Robert Melville was despatched by them to Lochleven, carrying with him, concealed in the scabbard of his sword, letters to the Queen from the Earl of Athole, Maitland of Lethington, and even from Throgmorton, the English ambassador, who was then favourable to the unfortunate Mary, conjuring her to yield to the necessity of the times, and to subscribe such deeds as Lindesay should lay before her, without being startled by their tenor; and assuring her that her doing so, in the state of captivity under which she was placed, would neither, in law, honour, nor conscience, be binding upon her when she should obtain her liberty. Submitting, by the advice of one part of her subjects, to the menace of the others, and learning that Lindesay was arrived in a boasting, that is, threatening, humour, the Queen, 'with some reluctance, and with tears,' saith Knox, subscribed one deed resigning her crown to her infant son, and another establishing the Earl of Murray regent. It seems agreed by historians that Lindesay behaved with great brutality on the occasion. The deeds were signed 24th July 1567.

NOTE 17. — GANELON, p. 262

Gan, Gano, or Ganelon of Mayence, is, in the romances on the subject of Charlemagne and his Paladins, always represented as the traitor by whom the Christian champions are betrayed.

NOTE 18. — SCOTTISH FAIRS, p. 276

At Scottish fairs, the baillie, or magistrate, deputed by the lord in whose name the meeting is held, attends the fair with his guard, decides trifling disputes, and punishes on the spot any petty delinquencies. His attendants are usually armed with halberds, and, sometimes at least, escorted by music. Thus, in the *Life and Death of Hubbie Simpson*, we are told of that famous minstrel —

NOTES TO THE ABBOT

At fairs he play'd before the spear-men,
 And gaily graithed in their gear-men ; —
 Steel bonnets, jacks, and swords shone clear then,
 Like ony bead.
 Now wha shall play before sic weir-men,
 Since Habbie's dead !

NOTE 19. — KIERY CRAIGS, p. 278

Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam, in the year 1817, formed what was called a Blair-Adam Club, consisting of Sir Walter Scott and a few other friends, who assembled once a-year at Blair-Adam House, near the shores of Lochleven. In his *Reminiscences*, the Lord Chief-Commissioner, when referring to the anonymous publication of the Waverley Novels, records the following anecdote : — ' What confirmed, and was certainly meant to disclose to me the author, was the mention of the Kiery Craigs, a picturesque piece of scenery in the grounds of Blair-Adam, as being in the vicinity of Kelty Bridge, the *howff* of Auchtermuchty, the Kinross carrier. It was only an intimate friend of the family . . . who could know anything of the Kiery Craigs or its name ; and both the scenery and the name had attractions for Sir Walter.

' At our first meeting after the publication of the *Abbot*, when the party was assembled on the top of the rock, the Chief-Baron Shepherd, looking Sir Walter full in the face, and stamping his staff on the ground, said, " Now, Sir Walter, I think we be upon the top of the Kiery Craigs." Sir Walter preserved profound silence ; but there was a conscious looking down, and a considerable elongation of his upper lip.' — Blair-Adam *Tracts*, 1834, p. xxxv., and Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. vi. p. 264 (*Lalag*).

NOTE 20. — MOTHER NICNEVEN, p. 283

This was the name given to the grand Mother Witch, the very Hecate of Scottish popular superstition. Her name was bestowed, in one or two instances, upon sorceresses, who were held to resemble her by their superior skill in ' Hell's black grammar.'

NOTE 21. — DARK GREY MAN, p. 304

By an ancient, though improbable, tradition the Douglasses are said to have derived their name from a champion who had greatly distinguished himself in an action. When the king demanded by whom the battle had been won, the attendants are said to have answered, ' Sholto Douglas, sir' ; which is said to mean, ' Yonder dark grey man.' But the name is undoubtedly territorial, and taken from Douglas river and vale.

NOTE 22. — SUPPOSED CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE LIFE OF MARY, p. 358

A romancer, to use a Scottish phrase, wants but a hair to make a tether of. The whole detail of the steward's supposed conspiracy against the life of Mary is grounded upon an expression in one of her letters, which affirms that Jasper Dryfesdale, one of the Laird of Lochleven's servants, had threatened to murder William Douglas (for his share in the Queen's escape), and averred that he would plant a dagger in Mary's own heart. — Chalmers's *Life of Queen Mary*, vol. i., p. 278.

NOTE 23. — MUFFLED MAN, p. 366

Generally a disguised man ; originally one who wears the cloak or mantle muffled round the lower part of the face to conceal his countenance. I have

on an ancient piece of iron the representation of a robber thus accoutred, endeavouring to make his way into a house, and opposed by a mastiff, to whom he in vain offers food. The motto is *Spernit dona fides*. It is part of a fire-grate said to have belonged to Archbishop Sharpe.

NOTE 24. — *THE HOWLET*, p. 382

Sir John Holland's poem of *The Howlet* is known to collectors by the beautiful edition presented to the Bannatyne Club by Mr. David Laing. —

The preface contains remarks by Sir Walter Scott, who was president of the club. The poem was composed about the middle of the 15th century, and has generally been supposed to be a satire on James II. of Scotland (*Laing*).

NOTE 25. — *DEMEANOUR OF QUEEN MARY*, p. 386

In the dangerous expedition to Aberdeenshire, Randolph, the English ambassador, gives Cecil the following account of Queen Mary's demeanour: —

'In all those garbules, I assure your honour I never saw the Queen merrier, never dismayed; nor never thought I that stomache to be in her that I find. She repented nothing but, when the lords and others, at Inverness, came in the morning from the watches, that she was not a man to know what life it war to lye all night in the fields, or to walk upon the causeway with a jack, and a knapsack, a Glasgow buckler, and a broadsword.' — RANDOLPH to CECIL, *September 18, 1562*.

The writer of the above letter seems to have felt the same impression which Catherine Seyton, in the text, considered as proper to the Queen's presence among her armed subjects.

'Though we neither thought nor looked for other than on that day to have fought or never — what desperate blows would not have been given, when every man should have fought in the sight of so noble a queen, and so many fair ladies, our enemies to have taken them from us, and we to save our honours, not to be reft of them, your honour can easily judge!' — *The same to the same, September 24, 1562*.

NOTE 26. — *ESCAPE OF QUEEN MARY FROM LOCHLEVEN*, p. 389

It is well known that the escape of Queen Mary from Lochleven was effected by George Douglas, the youngest brother of Sir William Douglas, the lord of the castle; but the minute circumstances of the event have been a good deal confused, owing to two agents having been concerned in it who bore the same name. It has been always supposed that George Douglas was induced to abet Mary's escape by the ambitious hope that, by such service, he might merit her hand. But his purpose was discovered by his brother Sir William, and he was expelled from the castle. He continued, notwithstanding, to hover in the neighbourhood, and maintain a correspondence with the royal prisoner and others in the fortress.

If we believe the English ambassador Drury, the Queen was grateful to George Douglas, and even proposed a marriage with him — a scheme which could hardly be serious, since she was still the wife of Bothwell, but which, if suggested at all, might be with a purpose of gratifying the Regent Murray's ambition, and propitiating his favour; since he was, it must be remembered, the brother-utrine of George Douglas, for whom such high honour was said to be designed.

The proposal, if seriously made, was treated as inadmissible, and Mary again resumed her purpose of escape. Her failure in her first attempt has some picturesque particulars, which might have been advantageously introduced in fictitious narrative. Drury sends Cecil the following account of the matter: —

'But after, upon the 25th of the last (April 1567), she enterprised an escape, and was the rather near effect, through her accustomed long lying in bed all the morning. The manner of it was thus: there cometh in to her the laundress early as other times before she was wanted, and the Queen according to such a secret practice putteth on her the hood of the laundress, and so with the fardel of clothes and the muffler upon her face, passeth out and entreth the boat to pass the loch; which, after some space, one of them that rowed said merrily, "Let us see what manner of dame this is," and therewith offered to pull down her muffler, which, to defend, she put up her hands, which they spied to be very fair and white; wherewith they entered into suspicion whom she was, beginning to wonder at her enterprise. Whereat she was little dismayed, but charged them, upon danger of their lives, to row her over to the shore, which they nothing regarded, but eftsoons rowed her back again, promising her it should be secreted, and especially from the lord of the house, under whose guard she lyeth. It seemeth she knew her refuge, and where to have found it if she had once landed; for there did, and yet do linger, at a little village called Kinross, hard at the loch side, the same George Douglas, one Sempill, and one Beton, the which two were sometime her trusty servants, and, as yet appeareth, they mind her no less affection.' — Bishop Keith's *History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland*, p. 490.

Notwithstanding this disappointment, little spoke of by historians, Mary renewed her attempts to escape. There was in the Castle of Lochleven a lad named William Douglas, some relation probably of the baron, and about eighteen years old. This youth proved as accessible to Queen Mary's prayers and promises as was the brother of his patron, George Douglas, from whom this William must be carefully kept distinct. It was young William who played the part commonly assigned to his superior, George, — stealing the keys of the castle from the table on which they lay, while his lord was at supper. He let the Queen and a waiting-woman out of the apartment where they were secured, and out of the tower itself, embarked with them in a small skiff, and rowed them to the shore. To prevent instant pursuit, he, for precaution's sake, locked the iron grated door of the tower, and threw the keys into the lake. They found George Douglas and the Queen's servant, Beton, waiting for them, and Lord Seyton and James Hamilton of Orbieston in attendance, at the head of a party of faithful followers, with whom they fled to Niddrie Castle, and from thence to Hamilton.

In narrating this romantic story, both history and tradition confuse the two Douglasses together, and confer on George the successful execution of the escape from the castle, the merit of which belongs in reality to the boy called William, or, more frequently, the Little Douglas, either from his youth or his slight stature. The reader will observe, that in the romance the part of the Little Douglas has been assigned to Roland Græme. In another case, it would be tedious to point out in a work of amusement such minute points of historical fact; but the general interest taken in the fate of Queen Mary renders everything of consequence which connects itself with her misfortunes.

NOTE 27. — BATTLE OF LANGSIDE, p. 418

I am informed in the most polite manner by D. MacVean, Esq., of Glasgow, that I have been incorrect in my locality, in giving an account of the battle of Langside. Crookstone Castle, he observes, lies four miles west from the field of battle, and rather in the rear of Murray's army. The real place from which Mary saw the rout of her last army was Cathcart Castle, which, being a mile and a half east from Langside, was situated in the rear of the Queen's own army. I was led astray in the present case by the authority of my deceased friend, James Grahame, the excellent and amiable author of the *Sabbath*, in his drama on the subject of Queen Mary; and by a traditional report of Mary having seen the battle from the Castle of Crookstone,

which seemed so much to increase the interest of the scene that I have been unwilling to make, in this particular instance, the fiction give way to the fact, which last is undoubtedly in favour of Mr. MacVean's system.

It is singular how tradition, which is sometimes a sure guide to truth, is, in other cases, prone to mislead us. In the celebrated field of battle at Killiecrankie, the traveller is struck with one of those rugged pillars of rough stone, which indicate the scenes of ancient conflict. A friend of the Author, well acquainted with the circumstances of the battle, was standing near this large stone, and looking on the scene around, when a Highland shepherd hurried down from the hill to offer his services as cicerone, and proceeded to inform him that Dundee was slain at that stone, which was raised to his memory. 'Fie, Donald,' answered my friend, 'how can you tell such a story to a stranger? I am sure you know well enough that Dundee was killed at a considerable distance from this place, near the house of Falsally, and that this stone was here long before the battle, in 1688. 'Oich! — oich!' said Donald, no way abashed, 'and your honour's in the right, and I see you ken a' about it. And he wasna killed on the spot neither, but lived till the next morning; but a' the Saxon gentlemen like best to hear he was killed at the great stane.' It is on the same principle of pleasing my readers that I retain Crookstone Castle instead of Cathcart.

If, however, the Author has taken a liberty in removing the actual field of battle somewhat to the eastward, he has been tolerably strict in adhering to the incidents of the engagement, as will appear from a comparison of events in the novel with the following account from an old writer.

'The Regent was out on foot and all his company, except the Laird of Grange, Alexander Hume of Manderston, and some Borderers to the number of two hundred. The Laird of Grange had already viewed the ground, and with all imaginable diligence caused every horseman to take behind him a footman of the Regent's, to guard behind them, and rode with speed to the head of the Langside Hill, and set down the footmen with their culverings at the head of a straight lane, where there were some cottage houses and yards of great advantage. Which soldiers with their continual shot killed divers of the vaunt-guard, led by the Hamiltons, who, courageously and fiercely ascending up the hill, were already out of breath, when the Regent's vaunt-guard joined with them. Where the worthy Lord Hume fought on foot with his pike in his hand very manfully, assisted by the Laird of Cessford, his brother-in-law, who helped him up again when he was stricken to the ground by many strokes upon his face, through the throwing pistols at him after they had been discharged. He was also wounded with staves, and had many strokes of spears through his legs; for he and Grange, at the joining, cried to let their adversaries first lay down their spears, to bear up theirs; which spears were so thick fixed in the others' jacks, that some of the pistols and great staves that were thrown by them which were behind, might be seen lying upon the spears.

'Upon the Queen's side the Earl of Argyle commanded the battle, and the Lord of Arbroath the vaunt-guard. But the Regent committed to the Laird of Grange the special care, as being an experienced captain, to oversee every danger, and to ride to every wing, to encourage and make help where greatest need was. He perceived, at the first joining, the right wing of the Regent's vaunt-guard put back, and like to fly, whereof the greatest part were commons of the barony of Renfrew; whereupon he rode to them, and told them that their enemy was already turning their backs, requesting them to stay and debate till he should bring them fresh men forth of the battle. Whither at full speed he did ride alone, and told the Regent that the enemy were shaken and flying away behind the little village, and desired a few number of fresh men to go with him. Where he found enough willing, as the Lord Lindesay, the Laird of Lochleven, Sir James Balfour, and all the Regent's servants, who followed him with diligence, and rein-

forced that wing which was beginning to fly; which fresh men with their loose weapons struck the enemies in their flank and faces, which forced them incontinent to give place and turn back after long fighting and pushing others to and fro with their spears. There were not many horsemen to pursue after them, and the Regent cried to save and not to kill, and Grange was never cruel, so that there were few slain and taken. And the only slaughter was at the first rencounter by the shot of the soldiers, which Grange had planted at the lane-head behind some dikes.

It is remarkable that, while passing through the small town of Renfrew, some partizans, adherents of the house of Lennox, attempting to arrest Queen Mary and her attendants, were obliged to make way for her, not without slaughter. —

The Castle of Rutherglen was demolished immediately after the battle by the Regent's party.

The suburban district of Glasgow towards the south, named Cathcart, takes its name from the old castle, and, owing to the growth of the city in this direction, the site of the battle of Langside is brought contiguous to the south-east side of the Queen's Park. On the west of this park the site of the Regent Murray's camp is commemorated by the 'Camp Hill,' and at the village of Langside there is a cottage which goes by the name of 'Queen Mary's Cottage.' The Queen's Park is in a direct line with Glasgow Bridge, from which it is three miles distant in a straight line (*Latin*).

NOTE 28. — BURIAL OF THE ABBOT'S HEART IN THE AVENEL AISLE, p. 427

This was not the explanation of the incident of searching for the heart, mentioned in the introduction to the tale, which the Author originally intended. It was designed to refer to the heart of Robert Bruce. It is generally known that that great monarch, being on his death-bed, bequeathed to the good Lord James of Douglas the task of carrying his heart to the Holy Land, to fulfil in a certain degree his own desire to perform a crusade. Upon Douglas's death, fighting against the Moors in Spain, a sort of military *hors d'œuvre* to which he could have pleaded no regular call of duty, his followers brought back the Bruce's heart, and deposited it in the abbey church of Melrose, the Kennaquhair of the tale.

This abbey has been always particularly favoured by the Bruce. We have already seen his extreme anxiety that each of the reverend brethren should be daily supplied with a service of balled almonds, rice and milk, pease, or the like, to be called the 'king's mess,' and that without the ordinary service of their table being either disturbed in quantity or quality. But this was not the only mark of the benignity of good King Robert towards the monks of Melrose, since, by a charter of the date 29th May 1326, he conferred on the Abbot of Melrose the sum of £2000 sterling, for rebuilding the Church of St. Mary's, ruined by the English; and there is little or no doubt that the principal part of the remains which now display such exquisite specimens of Gothic architecture, at its very purest period, had their origin in this munificent donation. The money was to be paid out of crown lands, estates forfeited to the King, and other property or demesnes of the crown.

A very curious letter, written to his son about three weeks before his death, has been pointed out to me by my friend Mr. Thomas Thomson, Deputy-Register for Scotland. It enlarges so much on the love of the royal writer to the community of Melrose, that it is well worthy of being inserted in a work connected in some degree with Scottish history.

LITTERA DOMINI REGIS ROBERTI AD FILIUM SUUM DAVID

'Robertus dei gratia rex Scottorum, David precordialissimo filio suo, ac ceteris successoribus suis, Salutem, et sic ejus precepta tenere, ut cum sua

benedictione possint regnare. Fili carissime, digne censei videtur filius, qui, paternis in bonis mores imitans, iam ejus nititur exequi voluntatem, nec proprie sibi sumit nomen heredis, qui salubribus predecessoris affectibus non adheret; cupientes igitur, ut iam affectionem et sinceram dilectionem, quam erga monasterium de Melros, ubi cor nostrum ex speciali devotione disposuimus tumulandum, et erga religiosos ibidem Deo servientes, ipsorum vita sanctissima nos ad hoc exultante, concepimus; tu ceterique successores nostri pia sinceritate prosequamini, ut, ex vestre dilectionis affectu dictis religiosi nostri causa post mortem nostram ostenso, ipsi pro nobis ad orandum ferventius et fortius animentur. Vobis precipimus quantum possumus, instanter supplicamus, et ex toto corde injungimus, quatinus assignationibus quas eisdem viris religiosi et fabrica ecclesie sue de novo fecimus ac eam omnibus aliis donationibus nostris, ipsos libere gaudere permittentem, eandem potius si necesse fuerit augmentantes quam diminuentes, ipsorum petitiones auribus benevola admittentes, ac ipsos contra suos invasores et emulos pia defensione protegentes. Hanc autem exhortationem supplicationem et preceptum tu, filii ceterique successores nostri, prestanti animo complere curetis, si nostram benedictionem habere velitis, una cum benedictione filii summi regis, qui filios docuit patrum voluntates in bono perficere, asserens in mundum se venisse non ut suam voluntatem faceret sed paternam. In testimonium autem nostre devotionis erga locum predictum sic a nobis dilectum et electum concepte, presentem litteram religiosi predictis dimittimus, nostris successoribus in posterum ostendendam. Data apud Cardros, undecimo die Maij, anno regni nostri vicesimo quarto.

If this charter be altogether genuine, and there is no appearance of forgery, it gives rise to a curious doubt in Scottish history. The letter announces that the King had already destined his heart to be deposited at Melrose. The resolution to send it to Palestine, under the charge of Douglas, must have been adopted betwixt 11th May 1329, the date of the letter, and 7th June of the same year, when the Bruce died; or else we must suppose that the commission of Douglas extended not only to taking the Bruce's heart to Palestine, but to bring it safe back to its final place of deposit in the Abbey of Melrose.

It would not be worth inquiring by what caprice the Author was induced to throw the incident of the Bruce's heart entirely out of the story, save merely to say, that he found himself unable to fill up the canvass he had sketched, and indisposed to prosecute the management of the supernatural machinery with which his plan, when it was first rough-hewn, was connected and combined.



GLOSSARY

OF

WORDS, PHRASES, AND ALLUSIONS

ASY, AYE, to suffer, endure
AD UNGUIS, at the fingers' ends

ALEXIPHARMICA, antidotes to poisons, etc.

À MOI! MES FRANÇAIS!
Hither! my French guard

ANASTASIOS, or *Memoirs of a Greek written at the Close of the Eighteenth Century* (1819), by Thomas Hope, a member of a wealthy Anglo-Dutch family

ANDREA FERRARA, a Scottish brewer

ANILITIA, old women's follies, acts of dotage

AQUA, etc. (p. 309), wonderful water! It has been proved

ACUTE, sharp, acute

ARISTARCH, a severe critic, after Aristarchus, the most celebrated critic of antiquity, who lived at Alexandria before and after 200 B.C.

ARLIS, earnest money

A-TROWLING, a-rolling

AYER, a draught horse

AWMOUS, alms

BACHARAC, or **BACHARACH** on the Rhine, in the wine-growing region. It is nearly 100 miles W. of Würzburg

BACHELOR SAMSON CARRASCO. See *Don Quixote*, Pt. II. chap. xiv.

BACK-SWORD, sword with only one sharp edge

BAILEY, or **RAILEY**, the outer courtyard of a feudal castle

BANDERS, confederates

BANGSTERS, bullies, disorderly persons

BARNBOULE, a ruined castle in Dalmeny Park, on the Firth of Forth, belonging to the Earl of Rosebery; it was rebuilt in 1880

BAYNE'S TRAGEDY, *The Rehearsal* (1672), by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, Bayne being a character in the piece intended to satirise Dryden. The play (a comedy) concludes with a battle between soldiers and hobby-horses

BEARS, ARE YOU THERE WITH, a proverbial expression indicative of the repetition of an annoyance. A man, disliking a sermon on Elisha and the bears, went the next Sunday to a different church, but there the sermon was from the same text, and he exclaimed, 'Are you there again with your bears?'

BEEF-BREWIS, beef-broth

BELLONA, the ancient Romans' goddess of war

BENEDICTITE, bless you! a blessing

BENEDICTI, etc. (p. 85), Blessed are they who come in the name of the Lord

BENEDICTUS, etc. (p. 295), Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord, condemned he who comes in the name of the enemy

BIELD, shelter, refuge

BILBO, **BILBOA**, a sword made at Bilboa in North Spain

BIRLIT, made a whirling noise, spun away

BLACK-JACK, a drinking vessel or ale-pitcher made of waxed leather

BLACK ORNISTON, concerned in the murder of Darnley
BLEDDING HEART, the badge of the Douglas family, from Good Earl James having carried Bruce's heart to Palestine

BODLE, a small copper coin = 1/16th of a penny English

BOLL, or **BOW**, a dry measure = 6 bushels

BOLT-HEAD, a hollow glass globe with a long neck, used in distillation

BORDER DOOM, hanging

BOW, BOLL, an old Scotch measure = 6 bushels

BOWTON, HEPBURN OF, a relative of Bothwell, an agent in the murder of Darnley

BRAG, proudly defy, challenge

BRAN, the dog of Fingal in *Ossian's Poems*

BRANCHER, a young bird able to leave the nest and hop about on the branches

BRANDY-WINE, brandy

BRANLE, dance

BRAVADE, boast

BRETT BROW, smooth, high forehead

BROKEN CLAN, one that had no chief able to find security for their good behaviour, as the Gremes of the De-lateable Land

BROWNIE, a gnome. See Elshie in the *Black Dwarf*

BUMBASTED, or **BOMBASTED**, stuffed with cotton-wool, etc.

- CALDE WILLIAMS** (1794), by William Godwin, father of Shelley's wife
- CALISBURN**, the sword of King Arthur
- CALIFOLIE**, wife of the Moorish prince in Peele's play *The Battle of Alcazar*
- CALLOT'S TEMPTATIONS**, the masterpiece of Jacques Callot, a 17th century engraver of Nancy, whose plates witness to a most fantastic and grotesque imagination
- CALM COUGH**, a quiet tongue
- CAMBUSCAN**, king of Barra in Tartary, the model of kingly virtues, figures in Chaucer's *Squire's Tale* and in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Bk. iv.
- CANTHARIDES**, Spanish flies, used to raise blisters — an animal not a vegetable poison
- CARDINAL** (p. 357). See Uncle the Cardinal
- CARRASCO**, BACHELOR SAMSON. See Bachelor Samson CARRASCO
- CARLOUSE**, LAIRD OF, the head of the Clephane family; the house stands 1½ miles from Cupar in Fife
- CATES**, delicacies, fancy confectionery
- CATHOLICON**, universal remedy
- CELIUS**, a physician of the 1st century A.D., wrote in Latin a history of medicine as practised in ancient Alexandria
- CHANCE-HOUSE**, alehouse
- CHIRAGRA**, gout in the hand
- CHRISTIAN MAJESTY**, Francis II., king of France; His Very Christian Majesty was the usual title-designate of the king of France
- CHURCHILL**, a satiric poet of the 18th century. See Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, under the year 1763
- CLOUT**, a mark in the very middle of the target
- CLOUTED**, mended
- COCK OF THE NORTH**, Earl of Huntly
- Coe**, to cheat, deceive, wheedle
- COIF**, woman's cap or covering for the head
- COLEWORT**, any kind of *SPINACH*
- COLMAN'S DRAMA**, *The Iron Chest*, a three-act drama founded on Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, was written by George Colman, junior, and produced in 1793
- COMMENTATOR**, lay holder of a benefice
- CONJURAVEMENT**, etc. (p. 87). The princes have conspired among themselves, saying, Let us cast His cords from us
- CORBIN**, raven; **CORBIN-HESSENGER**, one that returns too late or not at all, an allusion to Noah's raven
- CORDIWARE**, cordwainer, shoemaker, leather-worker
- CORONACH**, dirge
- COURANT**, a lively, rapid dance
- COURCELLES**, French ambassador in Scotland, 1591-57
- CRACK-HEMP**, **CRACK-HALTER**, one fated to come to the gallows
- CRAFTCHILDREN**, servants, etc., of craftsmen, artisans
- CROWN**, a fiddle
- CROWN OF THE SUN**, old French gold coin of Louis XI. and Charles VIII., with the sun shown above the crown = 14s.
- CRUISEMOND**, or **CRUSADE D'OR**, a Portuguese gold coin worth about half-a-crown
- CUBICULAR**, groom of the bedchamber, chamberlain
- CUTTLE**, to tickle, wheedle
- CULPAS MEAS**, my sins
- CURCH**, woman's cap
- CUT**, a gelding, a term of reproach
- CYPRUS**, thin black stuff
- DALMATIQUE**, a loose, long ecclesiastical robe, with wide sleeves
- DANER**, Danish
- DARK GRAY MAN** (Douglas). See Note 21, p. 438
- DARNAWAY** (CASTLE), the seat of the Earl of Murray, near Forres in Elginshire
- DEBATEABLE LAND**, between the rivers Sark and Esk, on the borders of Cumberland and Dumfries
- DES RODOMONTADES ESPAGNOLES**, a collection of tales, anecdotes, etc., of Spanish boasting, taken from various authors by Jacques Gautier, or Gaultier (Rouen, 1612)
- DIASCORDIUM**, confection of scordium, the water germander
- DIENT YOUR EARS**, wipe your mouths, be silent
- DINE**, to deck, adorn
- DISCRIMIT**, etc. (p. 290). The wise man discriminates things which the fool confounds
- DISPORT UPON**, disposed of
- DOUT**, judgment, verdict
- DORTOUR**, a dormitory
- DOUCE**, sober, sedate
- DOUGLAS**, LADY OF THE MORNES or (p. 347). Catherine Douglas endeavoured to keep out the murderers of James I. of Scotland by thrusting her arm through the staple of the door (1437)
- DO VENIAN**, I give you leave
- DOW**, dove
- DRAFFANS**, or **DRAFFAN**, a castle belonging to the Hamiltons in Fifeshire; but Mary proceeded to Hamilton Park when she left Niddrie Castle
- DRAWCAMER**, a blustering braggart in *The Rehearsal* (1672), by G. Villiers, Duke of Buckingham
- DREADDOUR**, dread, fear
- DUDSON-DAGGER**, a small dagger with an ornamental wooden haft
- DUMFRA**, an old woman who watches that a younger observes the rules of *HECUBISM*
- DURE OF ORRENT**, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell
- DUNCANSBY HEAD**, in the extreme north of Scotland
- EARN**, or **ERNE**, an eagle
- ELECTUARY**, a medical confection or paste
- EN CHAMP CLOS**, in an inclosed field
- ERNE**, or **EARN**, eagle
- EVERICHE**, every
- EXHERIDATED**, or **EXHEREDATED**, disinherited
- EX ORIBUS PARVULORUM**, Out of the mouths of babes
- FACIES HYPOCRATICA**, hippocratic or sickly countenance
- FARTINGALE**, a hoop petticoat
- FASH**, trouble, concern
- FELL**, skin; cruel
- FIAT EXPERIMENTUM**, etc. (p. 353). Let the experiment be made upon a common body

FLAUNTS, or FLANS, pancakes
FLAUNT, to flatter, cajole

FOUR-HAMMER, sledge-hammer

FOUR-HOURS' FERRY, four o'clock meal—a phrase used by Knox

FOX, an old-fashioned broadsword

FRACK, bold, prompt and resolute

FRENCH FARM, or NICHOLAS HUBERT, a servant of Bothwell, sometime also of Mary, assisted in the murder of Darnley

FRONCE, a distemper in hawks

FUSTRA, etc. (p. 354). In vain we vex the sick with remedies

GAILLARD, wanton

GALLIARD, a lively dance; a gay youth

GALLOWAY WAG, a small, strong breed of Galloway, the south-west extremity of Scotland

GALOPIN, scullion, cook's boy

GAMBADE, gambol, leap, spring

GAMBADONS, gaiters, leggings

GAMBOLLES, broils, confusions

GASEROUND, a hound that pursues by sight, greyhound

GEAR, matter, business

GEAR-MEN, men in armour

GETIC LORE, knowledge of dancing

GLEE, a kite

GLEE, quick, sharp, keen

GORDON, SIR JOHN, fourth son of the Earl of Huntly, and one of Queen Mary's lovers, was beheaded at Aberdeen for treason in 1562

GOPELLERS, Reformers

GOUSTY, dreary, desolate

GOWD, to LAY, to embroider in gold

GRAITHED, equipped, decked

GREYSTEIL, Sir Greysteil, a metrical romance, in which are narrated the exploits of a brave knight, Sir Greysteil. To call a man by this title, as James V. did Archibald Douglas of Killapindie, was esteemed a choice compliment. See Sir Eger

GUINES. Mary's mother was of this powerful French (Lorraine) family

GUY OF WARWICK, the hero

of a mediæval romance, slew a fierce Dun Cow on Dunsinore Heath, near Rugby

HACKET, or HAWKIT, white-faced

HAGO, or HAO, a pit or break in a morass

HAGGARD, a wild hawk that has been tamed

HALIDOME, land held under a religious house

HARQUEBUSE, an ancient firelock

HARRY GREAT, a ghost = 44., of Henry VIII.

HAWICK to HERMITAGE CASTLE. Mary rode in one day from Jedburgh (not Hawick) to Hermitage Castle, near the Border, and back, a total distance of 40 miles, to visit the Earl of Bothwell, who had been wounded in a Border fight

HAY OF LUNCARTY, the ancestor of three noble Scottish families—Errol, Tweeddale, and Kinnoull—was originally a peasant, who saved the Scottish army from defeat by the Danes shortly before the year 904

HAY OF TALLA, a Borderer, concerned in the murder of Darnley

HERLING, young of the sea-trout

HETWOOD, THOMAS, dramatist and actor of the first half of the 17th century

HIC JACET, etc. (p. 114). Here lies Abbot Eustace

HON (ORMISTON), uncle of the Black Laird of Ormiston, concerned in the murder of Darnley

HOBBY, a strong, active nag

HODDEN-GREY, rough cloth, the natural colour of the wool

HOLYROOD PALACE was rebuilt in the reign of Charles II., not Charles I., namely, between 1671 and 1679

HOODIE, or HOODED, crow, the carrion crow

HORN, PUT TO. See Put to horn

HORS D'ŒUVRE, digression

HOURS, a Roman Catholic book of prayers for private devotions

HOWFF, a haunt, resort

HOWLET, the owl

ILE, the same; **ILEA**, every

IN ADVERSITATE, etc. (p. 436). Patient in adversity, benevolent in prosperity

IN DUBIO, in doubt

INJURE, or INJURE, to insinuate, force oneself in insidiously

'IN MY SCHOOL-DAYS', etc. (p. 111). See *Merchant of Venice*, Act i. sc. 1

INTRATE, between ourselves

INTRATE, MRS FILL, Enter, my sons

JACK-A-LENT VISAGES, long, serious faces, like penitents in Lent

JERDART STAFF, a species of battle-axe formerly used by the men of Jedburgh or Jeddart

JERKING, a beating, whipping

JESSAS, straps fastened round the legs of a hawk

JETER, celebrated (p. 123). Howleglass, the German

Till Eulenspiegel (i.e. Owl Glass)

JE SUI, etc. (p. 436). I am neither king nor prince; I am the Lord of Coucy

JIBBAT, gibbet

JACHTING, behaving in an affected manner, sauntering

JOUE, stoop, duck down;

JOUE AND LET THE JAW GAZE BY, stoop and let the wave pass

JOUE DE JETÉE, a fast-day

JULER, a sweet drink, cordial

KAIL, colewort, cabbage

KAIN-FOWLS, fowls paid as part of rent

KELPIS, a water-spirit

KENT, to propel a boat by pushing a long pole against the bottom of the lake

KERRS, of Cessford and Fernieherat, powerful Border chieftains, Catholics and supporters of Mary Queen of Scots

KING CANDAULES, of ancient Lydia in Asia Minor, who exposed his wife to Gyges, in the 6th century B.C.

The lady persuaded Gyges to slay her husband, and then married the slayer

KIRN-MILK, butter-milk

KITTLE, ticklish, difficult

KNAPSAP, KNAPSCHALLS, or KNAPSULL, head-piece or helmet

- LADIES SANDOLANIS AND OLIVANUS.** The third dance of the trio was named Weir. See Allan Ramsay's *Evergreen* (1724), vol. i.
- LA MIA DUE HIERONNE,** a universal history or chronicle, translated (1848) from the *Mars Historiarum* of John Colonna, Dominican, who in 1255 was made Archbishop of Messina, Sicily
- LANDWARD TOWNS,** rural, inland farmland
- LANS-COURT,** an ancient abbey in Cumberland, close beside the Roman Wall
- LAVOLTA,** a lively dance with a leaping step
- LAWING,** tavern-bill
- LEAST PERRY,** a worthless person
- LENNOX,** a former county of Scotland, embracing Dumbarton and parts of Stirling, Perth, and Renfrew
- LENNOX, SON OF TWO,** Henry Darnley, eldest son of the Earl of Lennox
- LESTER-KAIL,** broth made without meat
- LET, retard, hinder**
- LICITUM SIT,** It may be allowed
- LECTOR,** an ancient Roman executive officer
- LEMO LAKE,** where unbaptised children and good heathens were believed by the Roman Catholic Church to spend their eternity
- LIME,** thin, long grass; heather
- LITHEA,** lary
- LOANING,** lane, meadow
- LOCKERHAM,** coarse linen
- LOKDS OF THE CONGREGATION,** leaders of the Reformation in Scotland
- LORETO,** on the Italian coast of the Adriatic, 15 miles from Ancona; a church there contains the (reputed) house in which the Virgin Mary lived at Nazareth
- LUATH,** the dog of Cuthullin, in *Ossian's Poems*: 'Fingal'
- LUNGA BOBA COSTA SCIENZA,** Long robe but little knowledge
- LUFT,** lighted match, torch
- LURDANE,** worthless fellow, blockhead
- MAH,** baggage
- MAN-GARDENING,** one who cultivated fruit, etc., on land for which he pays rent
- MAIN,** more
- MALVOLIO,** the steward in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*
- MA MISHONNE,** my darling
- MARYS,** FOUR, young ladies of noble birth, attendants of the Queen—Mary Livingston, Mary Fleming, Mary Beaton, and Mary Beaton
- MARE,** a Scotch coin = 1s 1d.; a Dutch coin = about 1s. 6d.
- MAROT, CLIMENT,** poet, translated the Psalms into French verse (1541), which were very popular at court, and usually sung to secular airs
- MASSTON,** a dungeon, a word of Moorish origin, introduced probably during the crusading era
- MAZEARD,** the head, skull
- MEDICAMENTUM,** medicine
- MENHIN,** the entire establishment
- MERCAT CROW,** market cross
- MERRAN,** a small dog, lapdog
- MERRAN-PAGE,** cur of a page
- METOPORICAL,** physiological
- MEW,** to confine; cage for hawks
- MICHEL,** great, big
- MIXION,** a favourite; part, saucy woman
- MINT,** to aim at
- MIRROR OF KNIGHTHOOD,** with fuller title, *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood*, etc., translated out of the Spanish by Margaret Tyler and R. P. (1585-1601)
- MITHRIDATE,** an antidote to poison
- MORE SCOTICO,** in Scotch fashion
- MORISCO BELLS,** used in a morris dance
- MUNCHANCE,** an old game at cards or dice, in which silence was absolutely necessary
- MURDO IN THE PADDOCK,** a play (1768) by Isaac Bickerstaffe, the plot being based upon Cervantes's novel *The Jealous Husband*
- MCHSTER,** BISHOP OF, suppressed with violence the fanatic and impious proceedings of the Anabaptists in Münster, the capital of Westphalia, in 1535
- MUTCHLIN,** a liquid measure = 1 pint
- MY BROTHER SUBJECTS SAW ME,** etc. (p. 304), an allusion to the condition in which Mary was led into Edinburgh after the battle of Carberry Hill, and the scenes that followed in the Provost's house
- MYSTAGOGUS,** interpreter of mysteries
- NE ACCHEMERE,** etc. (p. 270), Go not into the council-chamber unless invited
- NEIGHBOURED ILL,** agreed ill, disagreed
- NICK WITH NAY,** disappoint by denying
- NICOL FORMY,** a Border district of Cumberland
- ONLAST,** obliged, engaged to
- OVER HEAVEN'S FORBODE,** Heaven forbid; OVEN GOD'S FORBODE, God forbid
- PAIRMAIN,** a variety of apple
- PASON, HENRI,** a Parisian lawyer. *Prince Selv* was published in 1740
- PALINURUS,** the steersman of *Æneid*. See Virgil's *Æneid*, v.
- PANTLER,** keeper of pantry, one in charge of provisions
- PANTOUFLS,** slipper
- PARCEL POET,** a bit of a poet, indifferent poet
- PARENT,** relative
- PARTLET,** a portion of dress, as a kerchief, for a lady's neck and shoulders
- PAR VOIS DU FAIT,** by violence, actual force
- PASCHER,** Easter
- PATCH,** paltry fellow, fool
- PAVER, or PAVAN,** a slow, stately dance
- PEARLIN MUFFLER,** a lace veil
- PEEL-HOUSE,** a small square tower of refuge
- PESTIL,** the plague
- PETITE FLAMBERGON A REN,** useless little sword
- PETRONEL,** horseman's large pistol
- PICKTHANK,** an officious intermeddler, toady
- PIN,** magpie
- PILNINWINKS,** instruments for torturing the fingers
- PLACE,** a small copper coin = 1d. of a penny English

PLAUGH, to interweave, plash
POCULUM MANS, etc. (p. 274).
 A cup drained in the morn-
 ing restores exhausted
 nature

PODAGRA, gout in the foot
POMANDRE BOX, a box of
 perfume

POPINJAY, parrot
POPTHEW, one possessing or
 inheriting part of a
 property

POTTLE, **POTTLE-POT**, a vessel
 holding 2 quarts, tankard
PRÆMIA cum, etc. (p. 280).
 The doctor is the devil
 when he asks for his fees

PRÆTOR, a Roman magistrate
PRÆGNATIC, medlesome,
 officious

PROFALS, to publish
PROUD PRAY, a person of in-
 sufferable pride

PUDDING-SUN HOUSE, a
 stronghold of the Arm-
 strongs in Liddesdale. See
 the circumstances alluded
 to in Scott's *Minstrelsy of
 the Scottish Border*: 'Dick
 o' the Cow,' vol. II. pp.
 115-116

P'VEN, poor
PET TO MORN, publicly call
 upon one to pay a debt
 under pain of being pro-
 claimed guilty of treason
PYET, magpie

QUARRELL-PANE, a diamond-
 shaped pane, formed like
 a quarrell, the head of the
 arrow of a cross-bow

QUAN, wench
QUEEN RICHENT, Mary of
 Guise (or Lorraine), mother
 of Mary Queen of Scots

QUINELL, wheel
QUINELL, till

QUID DICIS, MI VILL, What
 dost thou say, my son?
QUOUSQUE DOMINE? how
 long, O Lord?

RAYMOND LULLIUS, a 13th
 century philosopher, a
 native of Majorca, who
 invented a system of
 mechanical logic with
 which he tried to convert
 the Mohammedans to
 Christianity

REDDER'S LICK, the blow
 that so often falls on one
 who interferes in a quarrel
REDD UP, tidy, put in order
REDE, to counsel, advise;
 advice

REALITY, **LORD OF**, one hold-
 VOL. XI—29

ing territorial jurisdiction
 conferred by the king

REASSTER, one who harbours
 loose characters and
 criminals

RÉVEILLEZ-VOUS, etc. (p.
 340), Awake, fair sleeper

RIVLER, a hawk that catches
 its prey by the feathers
 only

RIVE, to read, tear
ROCK, distaff

ROSE, a ruck

ROSEMARY TOTTING, a con-
 spicuous hill in Cleveland,
 North Riding of Yorkshire

ROSEWAL AND LELIAN, a
 popular metrical romance
 that was still sung in the
 streets of Edinburgh as
 late as 1770. See Laing,
Early Metrical Tales (1828)

ROWANTARE, in popular
 superstition a charm
 against witches

RUFFLE, to play the bully,
 quarrel

RUNE, club, cudgel

SABBA, properly Sabra,
 daughter of Ptolemy, king
 of Egypt, the maiden who
 was rescued from the
 Dragon by St. George

ST. JAMES OF COMPTONELLA,
 a celebrated resort of pil-
 grims, at Santiago, 30
 miles from Corunna, in
 the north of Spain

ST. MARTIN OF BULLIONS, the
 St. Swithin or weeping
 saint of Scotland. If his
 festival (4th, i.e. 15th,
 July) prove wet, forty
 days of rain are expected

SALERNO, SCHOOL OF, ranked
 as the first medical school
 in Europe during the early
 Middle Ages

SALVE IN HOMINE SANCTO,
 Hail in the holy name;
SALVETE ET VOS, Hail also
 to you

SAMPSON'S YOW-REAKEE, or
The Fair Maid of Clifton
 (1634), by William Sampson

SAMYNE, same

**SANCTE BENEDICTE, ORA PRO
 ME**, St. Benet, pray for me
SCALIT, dispersed, separated
SCAUR, a precipitous bank or
 rock

SCOTT, MICHAEL, the magi-
 cian, who figures in Scott's
Lay of the Last Minstrel

SCRIP, to mock, gibe

SEXTON'S MOUND, the grave

SINCLAIR, OLIVER, an

unworthy favourite of
 James V.

SIR KERR, one of the heroes
 of the popular 15th century
 Scottish romance *Sir Eger*,
Sir Girahame, and *Sir
 Gilespate*, or *Sir Edgar
 and Sir Grime*

SIR GRIME. See *Sir Eger*
SASSY, skilful, cunning in
 similes, etc.

SUTCLIFFE, smirking
SWOON, a silet with which a
 maiden binds her hair

SWOTTAST, bubbles

SWO THE JOINER, a character
 in *Midsummer Night's
 Dream*

SOLTRA KERR, or **SOOTRA
 HILL**, the westernmost
 ridge of the Lammermoor
 Hills in Lothian

SPAR-WIFE, fortune-teller

SPARNIT BOWA VIDES, the
 faithful (dog) despises
 bribes

SPRINGALD, a stripling

SQUAR, short and thick, squat
STAMMEL, red linsey-woolsey

STAVING AND TAILING, strik-
 ing the bear with a staff
 and pulling the dog by the
 tail

STHERT, shut

STERTON, the Greek herald
 in the Trojan War, whose
 voice was equal to those of
 any fifty men

STOOP (of a falcon), swoop,
 darting down on its prey

STOUP, a vessel or measure
 for liquids

SUB RIGILLO CONFESSIO,
 under the seal of confession

SUTTER, somewhat sad

SUN UMBRA VITIS SUI, under
 the shade of his own vine
SUCORY, cheery

SUPERCEID, to suspend,
 postpone

TACE IS LATIN FOR A CANDLE,
 silence is the word

TALL-PYET, a tall-tale

TANT, attend, tend

TARCEL GENTLE, a trained
 male falcon

TENTIFICATE, certificate

TESTOON, or **TESTON**, a silver
 coin = 1s.

THEBAN, LEARNED, a learned
 man—a Shakespearean
 phrase (*Lear*, Act. III.
 sc. 4)

THERAPS, the originator of
 the ancient Greek drama

THUMBKINS, thumb-screws,
 instrument of torture

TILBURY, a jig
TILLYVALLEY, nonsense! a
 jig for —!

TO CALL UP HIM, etc. (p. 435), from Milton's *Penseroso*

TOLBOOTH, jail

TOTUS MUNDUS, etc. (p. 283),
 The whole world acts the
 player

TOUR DE JONGLEUR, juggler's
 trick

TRANGAM, or **TRANGHAM**, a
 trinket, jampery orna-
 ment

TRON, a church on the High
 Street of Edinburgh

TUSSIS, a cough

TUTO, CITO, SUCUNDE, safely,
 quickly, pleasantly

TWO AND A PLACK, two Scotch
 pennies and a plack = 4d.
 English

UNCLE THE CARDINAL,
 Charles of Guise, brother
 to Mary's mother, was the
 real ruler of France during

the reign of Mary's first
 husband, the feeble
 Francis II.

UN DIEU, etc. (p. 436), one
 God, one faith, one king,
 one law

USQUEBAUGH, whisky

VASQUINE, or **BASQUINE**, gown
 or petticoat, worn by
 Basque and Spanish women

VENDISSE, or **VENDACE**, a rare
 kind of white fish, whose
 flesh is accounted a great
 delicacy

VERTU-GARDIN, a hoop
 petticoat

VIN-DE-PAYS, the common
 wine of the country

VIVERS, victuals

VIX LICITUM, scarcely al-
 lowable

WANION, WITH A, with a
 vengeance, the devil!

WAP, flap, stroke of a wing

WARLOCK, a wizard

WAUR, worse

WEFT, or **WAPT**, a waving,
 beckoning, signalling

WEIRD, fate, destiny

WEIR-MEN, war-men, soldiers

WELTED, furnished with a
 hem or border

WHAUF, curlew

WHILLY, to gull, wheedle

WHITE-BOY, petted favourite,
 darling

WIMPLE, a veil

WINE AND BUSH. Vintners
 and tavern-keepers used
 in the Middle Ages to hang
 out a bush or bunch of
 ivy to indicate that their
 house was an inn; hence
 the proverb, 'Good wine
 needs no bush'

WITCH OF BERKELEY. See
 Southey's ballad *The Old
 Woman of Berkeley*

WONOT, will not

WRATH YOU NOT, do not get
 wroth

WTLIN-COAT, under vest

YOLDRING, or **YORLIN**, a
 yellow-hammer, bird

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